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ONE

MAGAZINE

A Free Will Baptist Magazine

NAVIGATING
the Rough Waters of Change

The
WORK
Goes On

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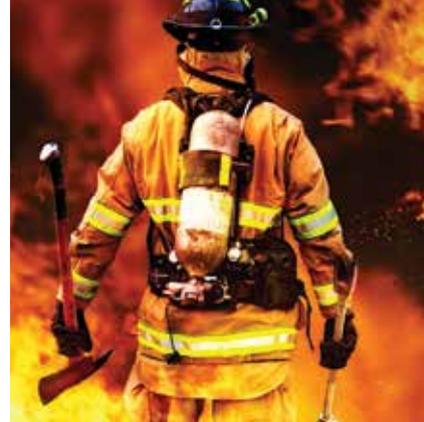
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ROLE IN THE EXTENSION
OF GOD'S KINGDOM.

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Forward Thinking

As *ONE Magazine* wraps up 13 years in print, one thing has become abundantly clear. Free Will Baptists are people on the move. Of the 58,063 subscribers who received the premier issue in 2005, 24,151 changed addresses in the intervening years—just shy of 42% or just over 3% a year. While that number may seem staggeringly high, according to the 2015 U.S. Census, Free Will Baptists actually fall short of the national average of 12%. One in nine Americans makes a new driveway his or her daily destination each year. (Interestingly enough, that number has declined steadily from 20.5% in 1948.)

For the first decade or so, these frequent moves had little impact on readers, but as email and digital media have gradually replaced “snail mail,” fewer and fewer of our readers-on-the-move take time to provide a new address to the postal service. As a result, a steady stream of magazines returns to the *ONE* office bearing bright, yellow stickers that scream “Forwarding Address Unavailable!” Sadly, we are left only one option—delete.

With this in mind, I challenge readers to make 2018 the year of “forward thinking.” Update your post office with your new address when you move, or contact our office directly via a quick call (877-767-7659), email (editor@nafwb.org), or by clicking on the Subscribe tab at onemag.org. Why is it so important to stay on the *ONE* mailing list? Consider several new adventures for the magazine in the coming year.

Pastors across the denomination will soon receive the first issue of *PULPIT* (Pulpit *ONE*) magazine, an occasional bonus issue designed specifically for pastors and their families. Made possible by a grant from Free Will Baptist Foundation, the publication will encourage, inspire, challenge, and equip pastors for ministry in an increasingly difficult and hostile culture.

The December-January 2018 issue will deliver an early Christ-



mas present in the form of a complete magazine redesign, with easier-reading fonts, reformatted columns, revised news pages—even a new cover masthead. Enjoy the new look and feel in the glow of the Christmas lights as you sip a steaming cup of hot cocoa.

Finally, the website will receive a complete overhaul in 2018. Redesigned for the world of social media and instant communication, onemagazine.com will make sharing, posting, and embedding content from future publications a breeze.

And, that is where you come in. What would you like to see on the new site? How can onemagazine.com be more beneficial for you in your daily walk with Christ? I look forward to hearing from you: editor@nafwb.org. **ONE**

ERIC THOMSEN, MANAGING EDITOR

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"HE HAS A GUN!"

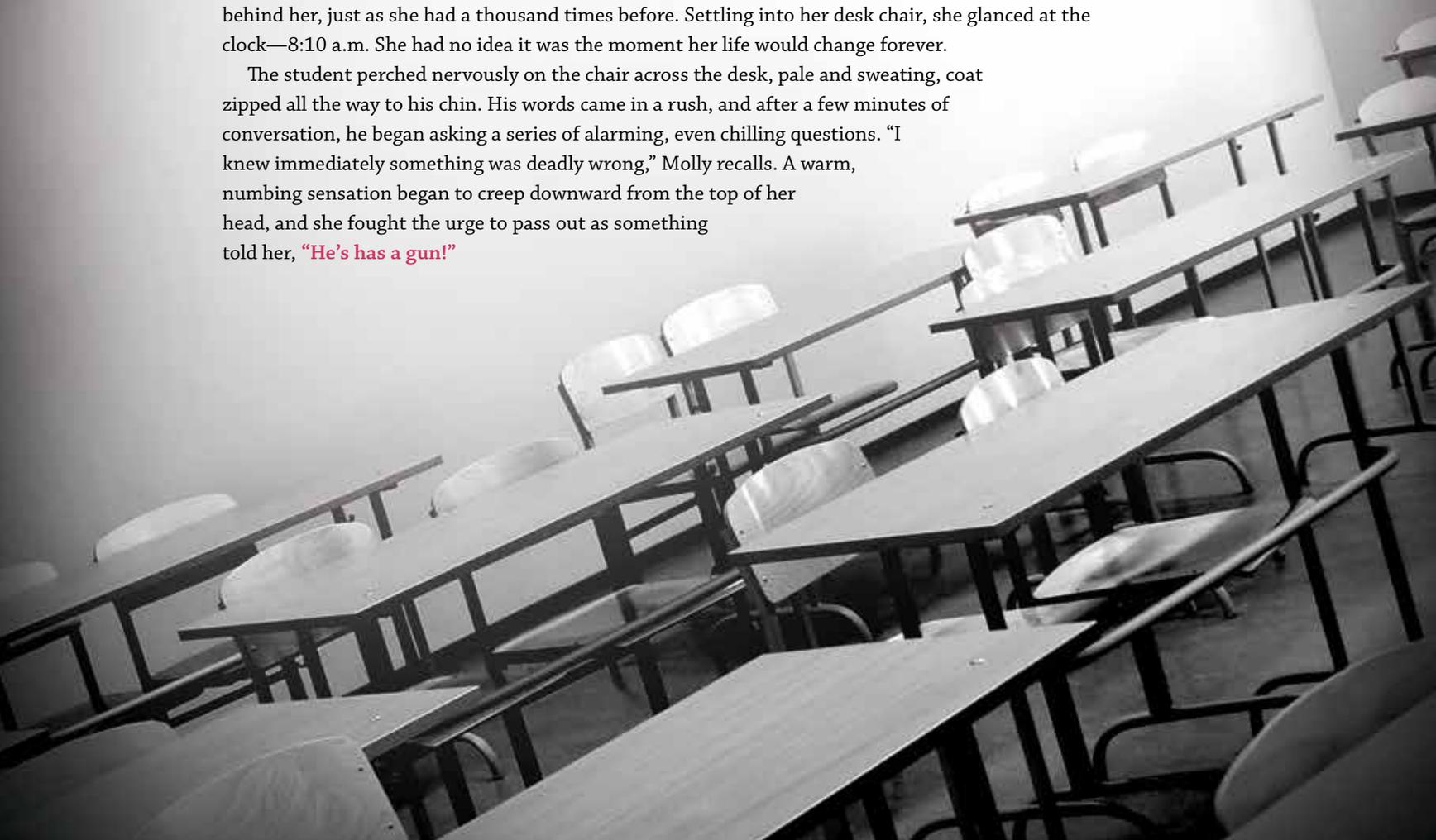
By Eric K. Thomsen

When a student interrupted her Wednesday morning planning breakfast in a coworker's office, Molly, an energetic middle school counselor from Tennessee was unfazed. Such interruptions are nothing unusual in a job where students with problems and concerns are the norm, not the exception. "You go on over to my office," she told him. "I'll be right behind you."



After gulping down a few remaining crumbs and excusing herself, Molly followed the young man down the hall, through the counseling department, to her office. She went in and closed the door behind her, just as she had a thousand times before. Settling into her desk chair, she glanced at the clock—8:10 a.m. She had no idea it was the moment her life would change forever.

The student perched nervously on the chair across the desk, pale and sweating, coat zipped all the way to his chin. His words came in a rush, and after a few minutes of conversation, he began asking a series of alarming, even chilling questions. "I knew immediately something was deadly wrong," Molly recalls. A warm, numbing sensation began to creep downward from the top of her head, and she fought the urge to pass out as something told her, "He's has a gun!"



As if reading her mind, the obviously agitated student began tapping on something in his coat. A moment later, he pulled out a 45-caliber Taurus handgun and laid it on the desk, along with a loaded clip. “I remember thinking ‘I am going to die in this office,’” Molly recalls. “The day before my 40th birthday, and I am going to die, right here, in this palm tree skirt.”

Yet, along with that random thought came another, much more powerful thought: “For such a time as this.”

COUNSELOR UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Molly always wanted to be in education. As early as second grade, she told her mom she wanted to be a school psychologist. “I have no idea where that came from,” she laughs. “I never even had a school counselor, and I’m pretty sure I had no idea what one did.”

After high school, Molly enrolled at Western Kentucky University to study English. Though she enjoyed her college years, it isn’t the educational experience she recalls most vividly. During a quiet evening of study her junior year, the FBI showed up at the door of her night class. Someone had called in a bomb threat, and not just to any room—to Room 502—her room. The agents quickly hustled Molly from the area and subjected her to thorough questioning. The caller was never identified. And Molly was never the same.

The event terrified Molly. She began reading about violence and crisis prevention, and she took a self-defense class. She never went anywhere alone, and obtained a license to carry a gun. From that moment, she lived with fear and anger and wanted to be ready to protect herself.

As college graduation drew near, Molly began to wonder what was next. A teacher in a senior-level class called *Marriage and Family* pointed the way when she urged her to become a therapist. The

advice struck a chord. Molly immediately enrolled in a master’s program for marriage and family therapy. She laughs as she recalls that “halfway through the first year, I realized, ‘I’m studying to be a marriage and family therapist. I’m 21-years-old, unmarried, with no kids. Really? Who’s going to listen to me?’”

THE TEACHER TRANSITION

Degree in hand, Molly returned to her original career choice—the classroom. For eight wonderful years, she dedicated her life to her students. She smiles at the memory. “I loved those children as much as you can love kids that aren’t your own.” And her love for students showed. She was a good teacher. Her students tested well, even though she admits she had no idea about the standards she was supposed to be teaching. “The truth is,” Molly confesses, “I didn’t know what I was doing, but the Holy Spirit was working in and through me. My students and their parents sensed it, and they gravitated toward it.”

Later, students recalled her “taking prayer requests,” even though Molly never prayed or asked students to share requests in class. She simply cared, and it showed when she allowed students to share struggles they were having or about loved ones going through difficulties. “I think I was a good English teacher,” she muses, “but all the time, God was preparing me to be an even better counselor.”

As she settled into her life and career, Molly never lost her preoccupation with crisis and trauma. After the tragedy at Columbine in 1999, her first year in the classroom, she became fixated. She just couldn’t understand how two young boys could plan and carry out an attack so massive and deadly without anyone identifying any signs of their plans. She continued her research but turned her focus specifically to school violence. She developed a curriculum called *Recognizing*

THE TRUTH IS I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT I WAS DOING, BUT THE HOLY SPIRIT WAS WORKING IN AND THROUGH ME.

Red Flags: An Educator’s Role in Preventing School Violence to help teachers and faculty members identify students with the potential for deadly behavior. With occurrences of school violence rising steadily, before long, Molly’s curriculum reached beyond school campuses, and she found herself training law enforcement officers and first responders.

The classroom also gave Molly plenty of hands-on experience with kids in crisis. She learned a whistle is an effective tool for breaking up fights. She learned to be firm yet still let kids know she cared. Two crucial events shaped her final year in the classroom. First, she received a call from Pam, a student’s mother who had been diagnosed with a rare form of cancer. Pam wanted Molly to know her son Danny would need extra help and understanding while she endured out-of-state treatments. Molly stepped up and experienced the joy of guiding and encouraging a student through overwhelming circumstances.

The second was a fight, a pre-planned fight between older students that resulted in severe injuries and made the local news. After helping break up the fight, Molly remembers going to the bathroom and “bawling my eyes out.” In that moment, she made up her mind it was her last year as a teacher. After talking it over with a good friend and mentor, she followed her heart for kids into counseling.

THE ROOKIE

During her first day on the job, Molly had no idea what to do, so she fielded every phone call that came into the school counseling office. Before long, the empty days filled up. She learned a school counselor is a catchall; she never knew what she would face next. More than anything else, Molly learned a counselor has a thousand conversations with students about anything and everything—some goofy, some serious, and some heart-breaking. She learned to meet students at their point of need.

Molly quickly grew to love her new role, making a difference in the lives of students on a personal, one-to-one level. She relished every opportunity. She also began to teach classroom guidance lessons, delivered from the perspective of a counselor but linking important life lessons to a particular area of study. During the 2015 school year, Molly realized many of her students hadn't been born when 9-11 occurred, so, she prepared a lesson based on the life of Welles Crowther, one of the heroes of the World Trade Center. An equities trader in the second tower, Welles led many people to safety before losing his own life in the raging inferno. Molly called the lesson "The Man in the Red Bandana" and concluded by challenging students to consider what they could do to make the life of someone else better.

In response, several football players went to their coach and asked him to help their equipment manager, a special-needs student, score a touchdown. The coach agreed, and the young man was given the opportunity of a lifetime. He suited up with the rest of the guys for the next game. And, with some help from the other team, he crossed the goal line to the roars of the crowd.

Touched by her students' actions, Molly shared the story with the race coordinator of a 5K held at Boston College to honor Welles Crowther. When the hero's

mother heard the story, she responded with a personal letter. The students were awed by the response, and Molly made up her mind to use life character curriculum provided by the Welles Crowther Foundation to teach additional lessons.

On September 27, 2016, Molly taught the first lesson titled, "One Life Can Make a Difference." She had students write down what they would be willing to do to influence the life of another person. She concluded each of her six classes that day with the words, "Sometimes, you have to stand in the gap with other people, but there will come a time when no one else is there, and you have to stand all by yourself."

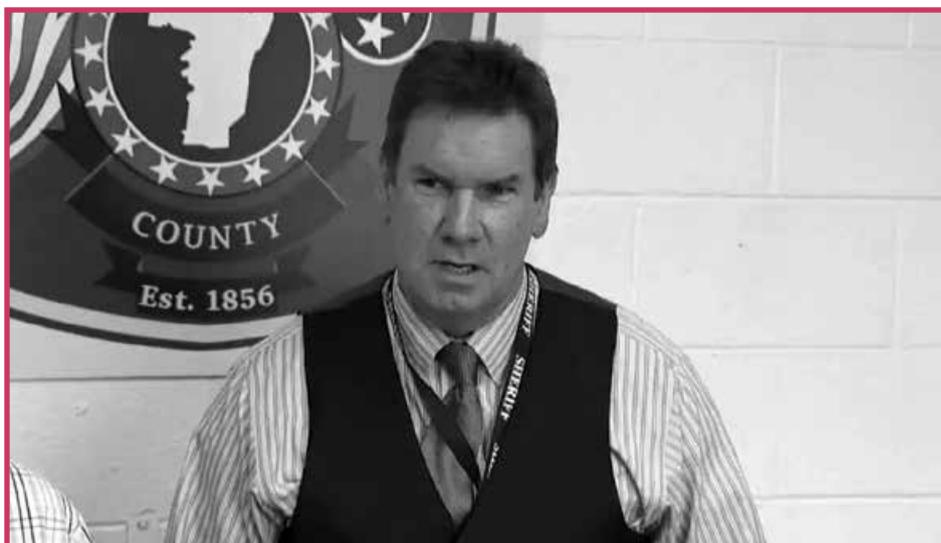
She had no idea those words were prophetic.

SEPTEMBER 28

The day began like any other. Molly was up early, running, training for her

first marathon. She remembers seeing fog rising from the water in the family pool and thinking fall was coming. She recalls standing before her full-length mirror and wondering, "Is it too late in the year to wear a skirt with palm trees on it?" Yet, beyond those simple memories, nothing about the day stands out to Molly before the moment when the gun clunked on her desk.

In that moment, everything changed. As time stood still, Molly finally understood—the childhood desire to work in a school setting, the terrifying experience in college, the near-obsession with school shootings, the thousands of pages of research, the training curriculum she had written and taught, the fight she had broken up, the story of Welles Crowther and his courage, the thousands of conversations with troubled students. For the first time, everything made sense. Her entire life, God had been at work in her, preparing her for "such a time as this."



NewsChannel5.com was live. September 29, 2016 at 11:19am · 



BREAKING UPDATE: Conselor at Sycamore Middle School talks student out of committing school shooting. MORE: <http://on.nc5.co/2cEqA0g>



Photos courtesy of the Congressional Medal of Honor Foundation

“Suddenly, something rose up in me,” Molly recalls. I remember thinking, ‘Not at my school! Not today. No shots fired. No lives lost.’” With every cell in her brain screaming, “Run! Run! Run!” she made the choice to stay, to fight with the tools God had been giving her all along. With heart pounding and mind racing, she calmly looked across the desk and said, “Honey, why don’t you give me the gun, and then we’ll talk.”

The student quickly drew the gun and clips back from the desk, but he didn’t make a threatening gesture. He simply settled back in his chair, put the clip and magazine in his coat, and let the weapon dangle loosely in his left hand. Against all laws of nature, Molly stood up and stepped around the desk, moving closer to the student. She got down on her knees beside him, looked into his eyes, took his right hand, and intertwined

HONEY, WHY DON’T YOU GIVE ME THE GUN, AND THEN WE’LL TALK.

the fingers of her right hand with his. “I made the conscious decision not to contact anyone else. I decided the best chance of survival for all of us was to get him to talk to me, to convince him to give me the gun. But, if that didn’t work, I wanted to be close enough to grab the gun and fight for my life.”

Molly knew that in a few short minutes, classes would change and teachers would enter her office. It was possible an interruption would agitate

the troubled, young man and trigger him to react negatively. She had to talk and talk quickly. So, she began to talk for her life. As she talked, she couldn’t help but see the pictures of her family and friends in the background, a reminder of all the reasons she wanted to live.

As the student’s story tumbled out, Molly quickly realized that several events in the young man’s life had converged into the “perfect storm” of anger, desperation, and confusion. She instinctively knew he wasn’t always this way, and prayed she could help him.

Suddenly, the student looked up at Molly and asked her if she believed in God. At that moment, remembering Columbine, Molly thought, “Dear God, he’s going to shoot me!” Yet, in spite of her terror, she replied, “Well, honey, I do, but I feel like you don’t. Is there something that has made you feel this way?”



He replied by explaining he had asked for help many times, and God had never answered.

Molly responded simply, "Honey, what do you think *this* is?"

She asked for the gun again, as she did many times during the encounter. Again, he refused. Molly asked if she could pray with him; he agreed. She recalls that prayer as if it were yesterday. "I prayed the most heartfelt prayer of my life. I thanked God for him. I thanked Him for bringing him to my office that day. I begged God to wrap His arms around him and help him feel His presence. I prayed knowing prayer was my only hope." As she prayed, Molly remembers a strong and calming pressure at her back, as if someone was physically touching her.

After praying with the student, Molly could sense a change, and she asked God for an opening. When the student noticed a race medal hanging on her wall, she sensed it was the opportunity for which she had been praying. She explained her marathon training was wreaking havoc on her knees. The student told her she could return to



her desk, that he knew she was uncomfortable kneeling beside him. Typical Molly, she told him, “I’m not getting up from this position—no matter how much my knees hurt—until you give me that gun.”

The switch flipped, and he told her he wanted to give her the gun. She replied, “Well, why don’t you let me take it, and then you won’t have to give it to me.” He reached over and put the safety on, and Molly leaned over and took it from him.

It was the first time a teacher or school official had encountered an armed student who came to campus with the means, opportunity, plan, and potential victims but instead went to a staff member and said, “I came to you, because you are the only person who can talk me out of this.”

Gun surrendered, the student threw his arms around Molly and began crying. She told him to go ahead and cry, that it would be okay; that he had done the right thing, and she was proud of him. The hug lasted three solid minutes as Molly ticked off the seconds on the large clock across the office.

IN HINDSIGHT, GOD HAD BEEN WORKING IN HER LIFE IN A MIGHTY WAY IN THOSE WEEKS PRIOR TO SEPTEMBER 28.

She remembered someone telling her that if a child hugs you, never let go until the child does. She refused to let go. When he finally released her, the student also gave Molly the loaded ammunition clip, and she calmly locked everything in her filing cabinet. She returned to the chair beside the student, and they continued their conversation. While neither the student nor Molly knew what the end result would be, he understood law enforcement had to be contacted.

A few minutes later, first responders

completed a gracious and compassionate interrogation. “For all the people who are angry at the police today,” Molly notes, “I wish they could have been there. Those officers were wonderful!” Interestingly enough, every first responder on the scene had been through Molly’s crisis training courses, more evidence of God’s hand at work.

THE AFTERMATH

What does one do after talking the gun from the hand of a potential shooter? While the school remained on lockdown, Molly quietly took orders from police officers and made a Taco Bell run. She stayed at work the rest of the day and went right back to work the following morning.

The media began to contact the school system, demanding an interview. Molly refused. She recorded a simple statement and let it go at that. She wanted parents to know that if it was okay for her to be at school, it was okay for their kids to be at school.

The frustrated media outlets created

their own stories. Rumors swirled, and some hurtful, misleading things were published. But Molly was okay. She met with students, parents, and teachers. As a school family they healed together. “For all the painful things I heard and read,” Molly notes, “I received a thousand other words of encouragement—cards from all over the U.S. and from as far away as China.”

In hindsight, Molly understands that God had been working in her life in a mighty way in those weeks prior to September 28. The previous Sunday, Cecil

Boswell, her pastor at Friendship FWB Church, preached a message titled, “Watch and See What God Is About to Do.” The morning of the crisis, an enormous turnout of students had gathered early at school for *See You at the Pole*, to pray for their school and teachers. Their theme? “Watch and See.” That week, Jeremiah 29:11 was inscribed across the bottom of her school planner: “I know the plans I have for you.” The list goes on and on.

Remember Danny, the student from Molly’s last year of teaching? As a senior, he had been assigned to her as a student assistant. With Molly’s encouragement, he applied for and was accepted to West Point. To say thank you, he painted a lighthouse to represent the counseling office motto: *This is your safe harbor in time of storm.* In his painting, the lighthouse didn’t shine out over water but stood alone, in the middle of a field. At the time, Molly thought it strange. Looking back, she sees the painting as a visual representation of what God did in her office that day.

After a few weeks, Molly and her family took some time away at the beach. One morning at sunrise, Molly found herself on the edge of the water. Kneeling, she scratched the date of September 28 in the sand and began to pray: “Lord, I want you to take this from me. I will not suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome, and I don’t want to be a victim—I want to be a survivor. Help this incident not to define me, but allow me to define it.” She took a picture of her toes in the sand and sent it to the school staff in an email with the subject heading “It Is Well With My Soul.”

A YEAR LATER

Soon after Molly returned to work, a steady stream of recognition began. The state of Tennessee awarded her valor. Her hometown named her marshal of the local Christmas parade. The attention was both humbling and embarrassing for Molly.

In January, she was contacted by the Congressional Medal of Honor Foundation

and notified she had been nominated to receive the 2017 Citizen's Honor, one of a handful awarded each year, and often posthumously. In February, she was notified she had been named as a recipient. The call came during her mother's bilateral mastectomy. "When Mom woke up, I told her 'Mama, I am going to be a recipient of the Citizen's Honor, and you don't have cancer anymore. It's a great day!'" Her mom later told her that moment helped serve as a distraction during her cancer crisis.

Molly traveled to Arlington National Cemetery March 25 to accept the award. At first, she felt ill at ease among the heroes at the gathering, but they quickly let her know she was right where she belonged. She was almost overwhelmed when she learned she was only the tenth

female awarded the medal. Seven of the women were educational recipients who died because of their courageous actions. Six were educators killed at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, in December 2012. The seventh was a crossing guard in Boston, Massachusetts, who pushed a child out of the way of an oncoming car and was struck and killed.

A year behind her, Molly looks back on the experience with a new perspective. "What I know is that many years ago, I asked God to forgive me, to come into my life, and to save me. On September 28, 2016, I asked for help, and once again, He delivered me."

What about the troubled young student she faced that day in her office? Molly holds no anger or resentment. "I am not

aware of another time in school history when a student had the means, the motive, and the intended victims, yet chose to 'stand in the gap' for himself, made a decision to seek help, and ultimately saved his life and the lives of many around him. I will always be proud of him for choosing to do what was right above all else."

Molly believes the young man has a powerful story to tell someday about standing on the ragged edge of a precipice and making the decision to turn away. "His story is an inspiration to others who are feeling alone and facing uncertainty due to trials," she concludes. "God is good, and because of Him, we always have hope." ONE

About the Writer: Eric K. Thomsen is managing editor of *ONE Magazine* and president of the Evangelical Press Association.



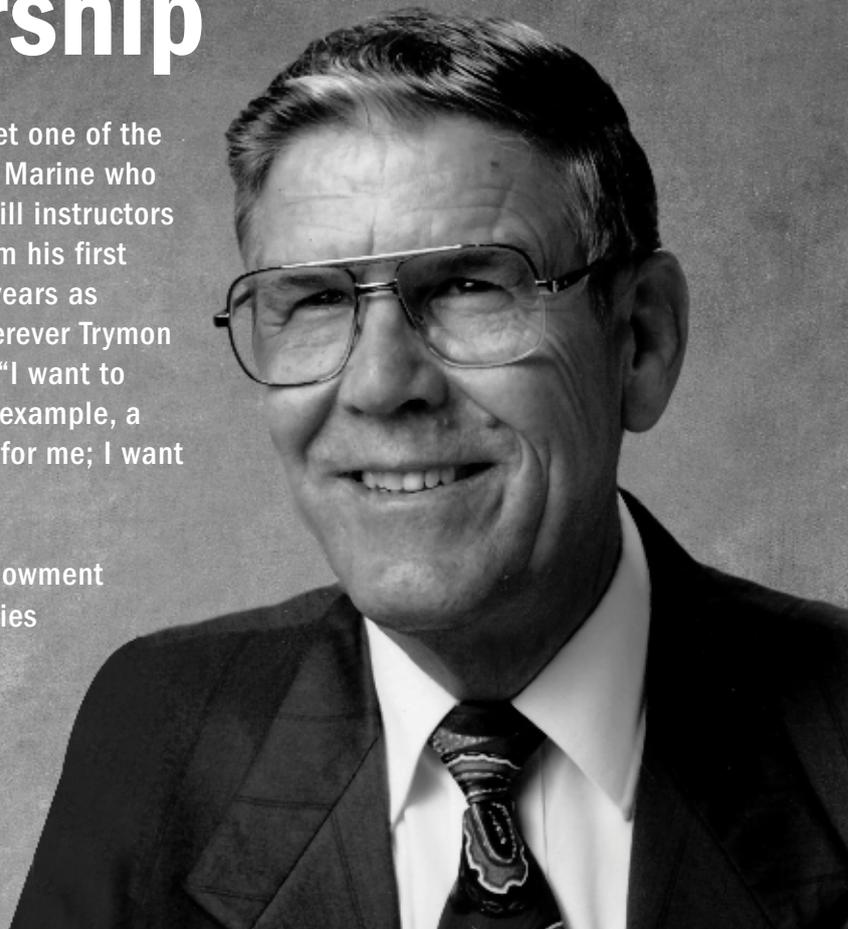
Legacy of leadership

TRYMON MESSER WAS AN UNLIKELY CHURCH LEADER yet one of the finest natural leaders of his generation. The former U.S. Marine who brought home four medals from Korea practiced what drill instructors taught him on Parris Island—leadership by example. From his first pastorate as a layman in Salinas, Kansas, to the seven years as general director of Free Will Baptist Home Missions, wherever Trymon went, people stepped up to follow. And Trymon knew it. "I want to leave something behind for others—a good trail, a good example, a good influence," he once said. "Somebody else did that for me; I want to do the same thing for others."

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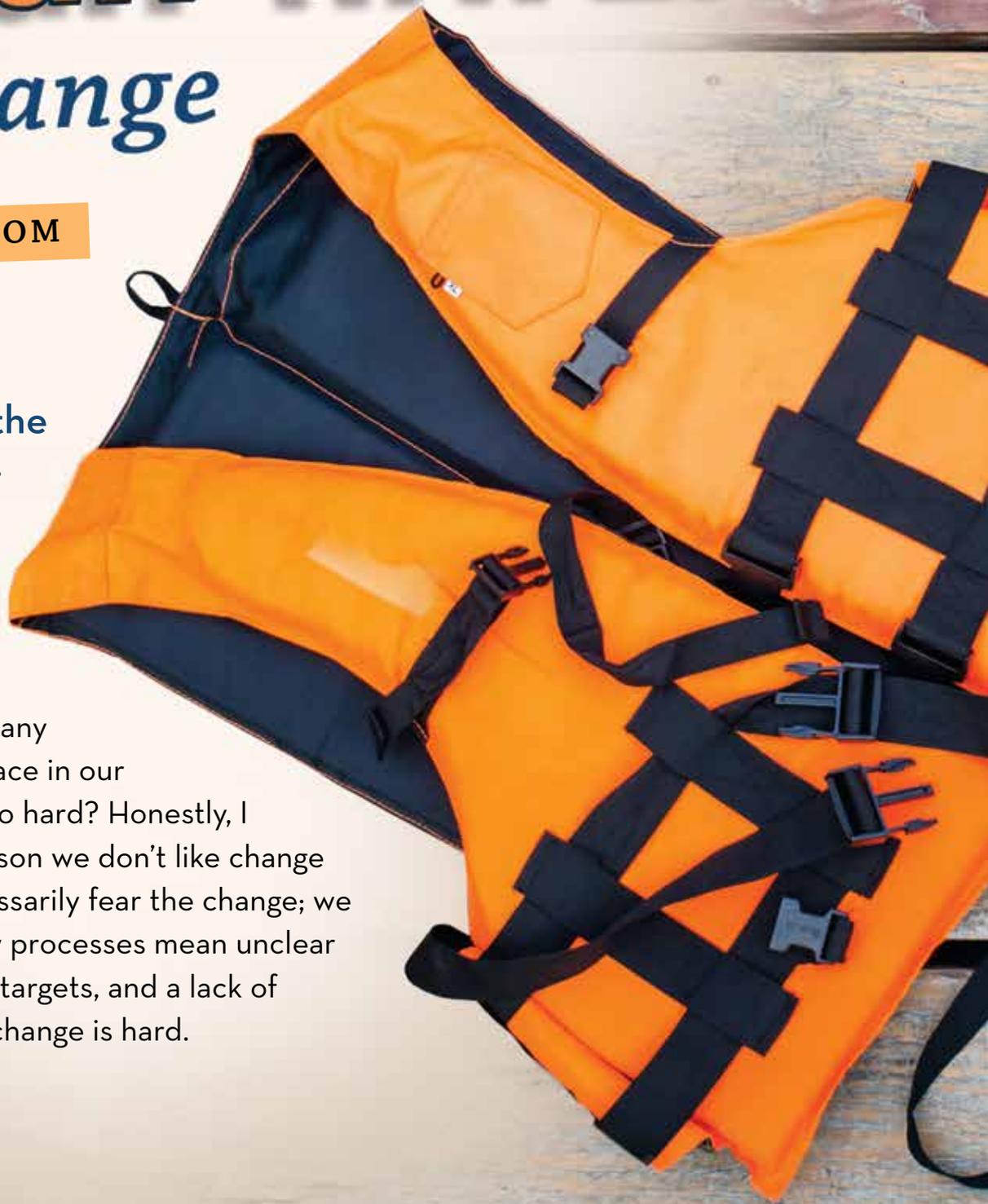
Navigating the **ROUGH WATERS** *of Change*

BY BRAD RANSOM

CHANGE.

It might be the scariest word in the English language.

Nothing is harder to adapt to than a new Bible or a new computer, and those are small things compared to many issues of change we face in our lives. Why is change so hard? Honestly, I think the greatest reason we don't like change is fear. We don't necessarily fear the change; we fear the process. New processes mean unclear expectations, moving targets, and a lack of comfort. No wonder change is hard.



Change often upsets tradition. For some reason, many people think of tradition as a bad thing, but it's not. Tradition is good. It helps us remember. Consider the story in Joshua 4:5-7, when the Israelites crossed the Jordan River into the Promised Land, and Joshua had stones set up at the crossing to remind them of God's provision. This is an example of establishing a good tradition. It's always good to remember what God has done. Tradition reminds us of our past, how far we've come, and what God has done.

Families often establish traditions around Christmas or other important holidays. Our family had a wonderful Christmas tradition for many years. My parents, sister, and her family would always get together with my family on Christmas Eve. We ate a lot of food, exchanged gifts, and just enjoyed spending time together. Then, on Christmas morning, before we opened our gifts we read the Christmas story from the Bible. These were wonderful traditions!

Eventually though, the kids grew up. They married spouses who had their own family traditions. For several years, our family fought against changing our tradition, trying to force our grown children to keep it. It didn't work. Eventually we had to adjust our



CHANGING METHODS ISN'T SINFUL. METHODS ARE PRACTICES.

family traditions to their new family dynamics. What am I saying?

Tradition is fine and a great way to remember, but tradition isn't constant. Traditions change. This may be painful, but it's true. Tradition can become detrimental if we refuse to change just for the sake of habit, comfort, or enjoyment. We must guard against this.

As long as tradition is still working, we may not need to change. But when circumstances and other factors change, so should we. Understand, I'm not suggest-

ing we stop reading the Christmas story on Christmas morning; we may just need to read it separately, with our own immediate families, rather than all together like we did in the past.

I'm reminded of the children of Israel who were led out of slavery in Egypt and wandered in the wilderness. They saw the mighty hand of God at work firsthand, but every chance they got, they reverted to Egyptian traditions and worshiped false gods. They made idols, and even though God delivered them, they quickly and frequently returned to their old, comfortable ways. Those traditions were familiar. They were comfortable. But they weren't good.

The fact is, sometimes change is necessary. We can't depend on fluctuating tradition. So what do we do with that? As humans, we naturally have strong feelings about it. "What if I don't like the change?" "What if I need to lead change and know people won't like it?"

Principles for Change

When change happens and you don't like it, it's okay. I'm sure it probably isn't the first time, and it won't be the last. Remember when the cable provider changed the channel lineup without asking you? Remember when you walked into Walmart, and the entire store had been rearranged? Those feelings are okay. You can't help how you feel. Feelings are feelings.

When change happens, mourn, then move forward. In some ways, change is like the death of a friend. You're saying goodbye to a loved and treasured practice. It's hard. Mourn it. Don't forget it. Those memories are great, but we must forge ahead.

Look for effort, not results, especially if you are not in charge of the change. Change is hard for everyone. Try not to be critical during change. Remember it's about the effort, not the results. Results will come. Patience and grace are important. This is especially true when you don't like change that occurs in your church. I can assure you, most of the time church leaders have prayed, labored, talked it through with others, and have good reasons to implement change.

If you are the one implementing change, and you are afraid of the reaction, I encourage you to break long-term change down into bite-size pieces, especially big changes.

Navigating a Necessary Change

An appropriate question is, "When do we need to change something?" The difficult but honest answer is, when what we are doing is no longer effective. Albert Einstein famously said, "The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over while expecting different results."

Many churches are in decline and struggling, because they are doing everything exactly the same as they did 20 or 30 years ago. Our culture has changed in the last 20 or 30 years. We can't

reach people (or keep them) the way we did decades ago. Again, remember what I said earlier. I'm not suggesting you "throw the baby out with the bathwater." Keep what works, but be willing to change what doesn't. Is your church healthy and growing? Do you have a steady flow of first-time visitors? Is your church seeing salvation decisions? Is the baptistry being used? If not, find the reason. Be honest and admit you have a problem.

Changing methods isn't sinful. Methods are practices. Sure, I wish things were like they used to be. I also remember the "good ole days." I remember people pouring into special services and the altars filling at every service. And, I'm not saying that can't still happen. It can. But, in general, our methods must adapt to the culture to reach the people of our communities.

Important questions include: "What or how should I be willing to change?" and "How do I guard against making wrong changes?" The only thing worse than change is change for the wrong reasons. Use the following guiding principles to navigate necessary change.

Identify your core values. These are unchanging values worth dying for, such as preaching truth, evangelism, and missions. These are non-negotiable. They become the filter all changes must go through. In other words, you would never consider replacing preaching in the Sunday service with a magic show or dance troupe, even if it would bring people in. (Yes, those are ridiculous examples, but they illustrate my point.)

I challenge church planters to identify five core values to use as the filter to guide all change. This keeps your church on track without the fear of compromising. Everything your church does and is about should align with those core values. Does the proposed change help you reach more people without violating these values? If the answer is yes, then go for it.

Define your philosophy of ministry. What is your philosophy of ministry? How do evangelism, discipleship, missions, community, etc. all fit into your ministry? What is important?

According to Dr. Larry Gilbert of churchgrowth.org:

Philosophy of ministry simply puts into understandable terminology the direction, purpose, and methodology of building a church. It means that you study the truths of the Word of God, looking for principles that will lay a foundation for your knowledge of the church's ministry. Then those principles are incorporated in a system of doctrine, beliefs or teaching to guide the pastor and church leaders in practically applying God's Word in the lives of those to whom they minister. This, in turn gives wisdom that will keep the pastor and leaders composed when challenges arise in how to minister to the people under their influence.

Write a mission and vision statement. I believe the best mission statement for any church is the Great Commission. The mission of every evangelical church is to evangelize and make disciples. You can dress that up however you want, but that's the bottom line. Your mission statement defines what you are about. It should be short, only one or two sentences. Once you've perfected your mission statement, you can expand it to four to six sentences that explain how you intend to accomplish the mission. This is your vision statement.

Think strategically. Every change requires strategic planning. If your outreach program isn't working, you need a new one. What will it look like? You will probably take a hundred steps to implement the new process. Don't make the critical mistake of failing to think through every step strategically, especially if you change something. Nothing screams *failure* louder than a lack of planning.

Consider the impact. If you design a new outreach system, you probably also need to check your assimilation or follow-up system. If you masterfully plan an outreach event and have 50 first-time visitors, how will you follow up with them? Every part of your ministry is linked together. Don't let one good change sabotage success because the impact of that change was not considered.

Finally, implement change slowly. Nothing can be more damaging than moving too quickly. I know of a music minister who thought it would be a great idea to implement change in his music program by adding new instruments. One Sunday, the congregation worshiped with a piano and organ. The next Sunday, without warning, guitars and drums sprawled across the entire stage. While nothing is wrong with adding instruments to your worship service, don't do it without warning!

I'm sure we could identify other steps to implement change effectively, and my purpose isn't to provide a comprehensive step-by-step plan, but to help you think through the process.

Change is necessary if we are no longer effective. I encourage you, whether pastor, church leader, or church member, to embrace the idea of change.

If you are a pastor or leader, consider everything your church does. If you don't have a steady flow of first-time visitors, there's a reason. If you have first-time visitors, but they don't return, something is wrong. Figure it out and change it. Maybe it's your worship service. Maybe it's your children's ministry. Maybe it's your people. My point is simply this: figure out what isn't working and do something about it.

Change is necessary. It isn't always easy, and it is often messy. But, if we want to continue to reach people and see churches healthy and growing, change just may be the thing that gets us back on track. **ONE**

Aiming for a HARVEST

By Jim Martin

In 2006, I was entering my seventh year pastoring Oak Grove Free Will Baptist Church in Gardendale, Alabama. The Lord was blessing the ministry. My house was almost paid for, and I had just remodeled it. I was happy with my life close to my parents, children, and grandchildren. But then, I met Dana Booth and his wife Betty, and God rekindled a vision and burden that began in high school, that I had not given up on.

It would be difficult to start a church in a state with no other Free Will Baptist churches without a partner. So, the move to New York was put on hold as I prayed and patiently waited on God. Unknown to me, Dana had developed the same burden, and God brought us together. It was my prayer that if God would allow me this opportunity, I would be a servant to Dana's ministry. God opened many doors. My children said, "You need to do this." My wife said, "We *have* to do this."

Today, I find myself serving as a lay missionary, working full time and trying to grow Landmark Church. I still have a clear vision and calling; otherwise, I would not be here.

The vision for me is to establish churches in and around the city of Rochester, and then move to Syracuse to start more churches. This cannot be done without people praying, giving, and answering God's call to come to New York.

I am in great need of someone (or several someones) to get a burden, a vision for over 19 million people living in New York, according to the latest census. Despite what you hear about businesses leaving New York, businesses are going up where we live, with 750 new homes being constructed within a square mile of our home. People are here, and they need the Lord. We are aiming for the harvest, and we hope you will join us. **ONE**

About the writer: Jim Martin and his wife Sylvia are church planters to Rochester, New York, one of three major upstate cities, along with Buffalo and Syracuse. Please pray for Jim and Sylvia as they plant Landmark FWB Church. Learn more: www.fwbnam.com.



Across the Nation >>

Lt. Amir Ashoori was approved and endorsed by North American Ministries (NAM) as a chaplain in the California National Guard.

Josh Bennett is starting a new work in Tifton, Georgia, a joint project with the Georgia State Mission Board and NAM.

Donnie Burke transitioned from Castle Rock, Colorado, to a joint project revitalization project in Gainesville, Georgia.

The Hawaii team, **Carl and Cynthia Spruill and Chris and Megan Davenport** completed fundraising goals and moved to Kaneohe, Hawaii, to begin planting church.

Dexter Guin has led Woodman Road Church to self-supporting status and continues to have a strong church in Colorado Springs, Colorado. We applaud Dexter, Dennise, and their entire family and team for a great job.

Jordan Ledbetter resigned as associate church planter from Project Utah and moved to Lynchburg, Virginia, with his wife, Emily who is pursuing her doctorate in nursing.

Barry Long resigned from the work in Aurora, Colorado, to take a pastorate in Florida.

Travis McKenzie launched a church in Ashland, Ohio, with a strong start. We look forward to the coming months in this new plant.

Tim Riggs has led Bay City FWB Church to self-supporting status and continues to do well. We congratulate Tim, Angie, their family, and team for a job well done.

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Power Conference Delivers Information, Inspiration, and Fellowship

Branson, Missouri—The third annual Acts 1:8 Power Conference on church growth and revitalization was held by North American Ministries in Branson, Missouri, May 29-30, at the Branson Hilton Hotel and Convention Center. Free Will Baptists from 18 states gathered for two, power-packed days of information, inspiration, and fellowship. Many entire families attended this year's conference, with activities and classes provided for children throughout the event.

NAM Executive Director David Crowe and Free Will Baptist Executive Secretary Keith Burden developed the theme of the conference, **Founded in the Past, Faithful in the Present, Focused on the Future**, during their keynote seminar sessions on Tuesday, while NAM staff members Kenneth Akers, Brad Ransom, and Jim McComas, and IM Board Member Janice Banks, taught breakout sessions in rooms often filled to capacity.

The church services on Monday and Tuesday night were filled with inspiring music and ministry by The Calvarymen from Hartville, Missouri, The Parsons Family from Kendallville, Indiana, and comedian/singer/songwriter Aaron Wilburn from Nashville, Tennessee.

Former Welch College President Dr. Tom Malone brought a challenging message during the Monday evening service on the importance of personal evangelism. NAM Director of Church Revitalization Jim McComas delivered a timely challenge on how Christians can “sing the Lord’s song in a strange land” to close the conference Tuesday evening.

Moving the conference to the Branson Hilton Hotel and Convention Center was a huge hit. Many attendees commented on how nice the hotel was, and how convenient it was to have everything under one roof.

The Power Conference will return to beautiful Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, May 28-29, 2018, at the Music Road Resort and Convention Center.



Hands Held High

By Jim McComas

In Exodus 17, we find an inspiring story that preaches a strong message to believers on the power of personal encouragement. The Amalekites had attacked the Israelites in the Valley of Rephidim. Moses commanded Joshua to organize an army to engage the enemy down in the valley, while Moses himself would stand on top of the hill with the rod of God in his hands.

As long as Moses kept his hands lifted to Heaven, the Israelites were victorious. When he lowered his hands, however, the Amalekites prevailed. As the day grew longer, Moses grew so weary he could no longer hold his arms up. When that happened, Aaron and Hur found a stone for Moses to sit on. Then they stood, one on each side of Moses, holding up his hands. With the help of Aaron and Hur, Moses' hands remained lifted until sunset, and Joshua and the Israelites won a great victory.

The simple moral to the story is just as true in the Body of Christ today as it was that day in Rephidim—God's people do better together than they do on their own.

North American Ministries Executive Director David Crowe has a powerful message on this subject entitled "Hands Held High: a Ministry of Encouragement." In this inspiring sermon, he shares of a time in his ministry years ago when God showed both him and the church he pastored how to be better encouragers to God's people.

In 2016, North American Ministries adopted that slogan, "Hands Held High: a Ministry of Encouragement," as the yearly theme for the department. In keeping with that theme, we also began a "Hand Held High" fund, with money specifically set aside to encourage pastors and their families in tangible ways. After we began raising the money, we began praying God would show us how to effectively be a blessing to weary and discouraged ministers.



God's people do better together than they do on their own.

One day, I was on the phone with a discouraged pastor, talking about serious issues taking place in the church where he was ministering. His family had experienced some hateful and personal attacks, his wife was facing serious physical issues, and to make matters worse, his children were becoming bitter toward God and the church as a result of all they had witnessed.

As the pastor poured his heart out to me in frustration, he said, “And on top of all this, our house payment is due today, and we have no idea how we are going to pay it.”

That pastor wasn’t asking for help, but I knew this was *exactly* the type of situation for which our “Hands Held High” funds were being raised. Our department was blessed to be able to provide the money to pay that family’s house payment, plus give them some extra money to ease their stress.

Later, in a thank you card to our department, the pastor seemed most grateful for how his children saw their financial need met that day through God’s people. Their faith was restored, because someone they didn’t know was willing to step up and lift their father’s heavy hands.

That gift was only the beginning of the wonderful things we have been able to do through the “Hands Held High” fund. Since

then, we have helped numerous pastors and their families:

- We helped the families of pastors who have passed away with funeral expenses.
- We helped pay the expenses of several discouraged pastors and their families to attend the “Power Conferences” in both Branson, Missouri, and Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. One pastor said, “This conference might as well as had my name on it. Every sermon and every seminar was such a huge help and blessing to my life.”
- We helped several pastors whose family members were ill with medical and travel expenses.

These are just a few examples among the many I could list.

As director of church revitalization, it is my job to help struggling churches. I believe that starts with helping our pastors and their families. Discouragement and depression is at an all-time high in the ministry. Anybody can tear things down. It takes love and compassion to lift someone up. North American Ministries has determined we are going to do everything we can to be Aaron and Hur to the real heroes of our denomination, those on the front lines of the battle—our pastors, their wives, and their children. **ONE**

About the Writer: Jim McComas is director of church revitalization for North American Ministries. To learn more about the “Hands Held High” ministry, visit www.fwbnam.com.



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Light and Truth:

Celebrating the First 75 Years of Welch College

BY J. MATTHEW PINSON

The year was 1942. The country had emerged from the Great Depression and found itself in the midst of World War II. That year was a turning point for the National Association of Free Will Baptists, which had formed in 1935 when the two largest regional Free Will Baptist conferences east and west of the Mississippi united.

One of the association's first orders of business was to form an educational committee headed by John L. Welch, the chief architect of the formation of the new association, and its elected moderator. Two Free Will Baptist colleges, Eureka College in North Carolina, and Tecumseh College in Oklahoma, had burned during the Depression. But in His amazing providence, in the middle of a world war, God was leading Free Will Baptists to establish a new college.

The growing sense of the need for higher education for Free Will Baptists is captured by the words of one of its strongest proponents, Agnes Frazier:

We who would meet the needs of this distraught age must look at our conditions and see that we as a church must recognize the interlacing of religious interest with every other interest in our national life.

If the Free Will Baptist message is worth preserving, it is worthy of intelligent interpretation to our young people . . . who are to be the leaders of thought and life for their generation in our church.

These young people know that if they are to get a thorough grounding in truth and ethics...they can only get it in an institution that is avowedly Christian.

These noble young people are begging that we furnish a Christian institution, supported by Free Will Baptists, where they may become better equipped for God's service.

The Board of Education chose Nashville, Tennessee, centrally located among the major centers of the denomination in the South and Midwest, as an ideal site for the new college. In September 1941, they purchased a building on Richland Avenue in the historic Richland-West End neighborhood. That building later became known as Davidson Hall. They named the school Free Will Baptist Bible College.

The board selected Free Will Baptist pastor Linton C. Johnson as the first president. He came to Nashville from South Georgia with his wife Ruth, a Pennsylvania native. The 29-year-old southern gentleman would come to exert more influence on the Free Will Baptist denomination than anyone else in the 20th century. Under his leadership, the college moved from a fledgling Bible school to an accredited Christian college with numerous new buildings and programs of study.

Johnson envisioned more than a Bible school, placing great value on the Western tradition of the liberal arts and sciences and the canons of classical learning. Extending the Kingdom of Christ was the college's aim, as reflected by the motto Ruth Johnson chose, from Psalm 43:3, "O send out Thy light and Thy truth."

Nine students gathered at that building on Richland Avenue in 1942. The original faculty and staff numbered four, including such luminaries as Laura Belle Barnard, J. R. Davidson, and Henry Melvin. Originally a two-year institution, the college added a third year of study in 1949 and a fourth year in 1950, awarding its first bachelor's degrees to five seniors in 1951.

God worked through gifted faculty in those early years, such as L. R. Ennis, who served as president for three years; missionary pioneers Laura Belle Barnard and LaVerne Miley; registrar and later academic dean and then president Charles Allen Thigpen and his wife Laura; treasurer E. B. McDonald; and teach-





ers and leaders such as J. P. and Anna Barrow, Leroy Forlines, Robert Picirilli, Ralph Hampton, and Mary Ruth Wisheart.

Under Johnson's leadership, the college experienced phenomenal growth, seen in the many buildings constructed from the 1950s through the 1970s. That one building on Richland Avenue expanded to more than 18 buildings by the 1980s.

But the heart of Free Will Baptist Bible College was not in the buildings; it was students, whom God was calling from Free Will Baptist churches around the world to invest themselves in Christian service to Christ, His Church, and His world. These students went on to provide almost half of the denomination's pastors, more than 80% of its missionaries, and myriad lay leaders in local churches who served as salt and light in education, the marketplace, and public life.

The college mission was advanced by three presidents after Johnson's retirement in 1979. Dr. Charles A. Thigpen moved the college forward from 1979 to 1991, adding programs and sustaining the college through difficult times. He and his wife Laura had an immeasurable influence on the character and development of the college, serving for four decades before retirement. Dr. C. Thomas Malone became president in 1991, with his wife Verna, and served for 11 years, leading the college to achieve SACS accreditation, adding many new academic programs, and spearheading the vision for relocation of the college. Dr. J. Matthew Pinson joined the college as president in 2002, and with his

wife Melinda, has served for 15 years, continuing to add majors and build the college's academic reputation, and leading the college through a name change and relocation to its new campus in Gallatin, Tennessee.

The college changed its name to Welch College in 2012 to signify its development into a more comprehensive Christian college and to open more doors for missionary presence in restricted access countries. It was named in honor of that original Educational Committee chairman John L. Welch and his wife Mary, who served the college faithfully for many years.

In 2017, after a quarter-century of planning and the sale of the West End campus, Welch College began classes at its new home in Gallatin, Tennessee. Constructed in a historic, colonial style, the beautiful new campus is situated on more than 100 acres in a growing suburban area of greater Nashville.

Many things have changed since L. C. Johnson and that small band of students and faculty gathered on Richland Avenue 75 years ago. But one thing has endured: Welch College continues to fulfill its original mission of bringing students into a Christian community of faith and learning where they can discover God's calling and be equipped to fulfill it, to be educated as leaders to serve Christ, His Church, and His world. Welch remains steadfast in its commitment to that mission, as it continues building on the faithful legacy it has received. **ONE**

About the Writer: J. Matthew Pinson is president of Welch College. Learn more about the college: www.Welch.edu or visit his blog: www.MatthewPinson.com.



1935

Organizational meeting of the National Association of Free Will Baptists appoints Educational Committee naming John L. Welch National Secretary of Education.



1947 & 1948

Johnson returns in 1947 and hires Charles and Laura Thigpen in 1948.



1941



Davidson Hall is purchased from T. O. Tirrill for \$15,000 on September 24, 1941.

1951



The college confers its first four-year degrees on May 25, 1951 in the newly constructed Memorial Auditorium.

1942



L. C. Johnson opens school for classes on September 15, 1942.

1953

F. Leroy Forlines is hired to head the extension department.



1944



Johnson resigns from the college in 1944. L. R. Ennis serves as president from 1944 to 1947.

1955



Robert E. Picirilli is hired to teach Greek and New Testament courses.

1958

The college receives accreditation through Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges in October.



1990

C. Thomas Malone is named the college's fourth president.



2012

Free Will Baptist Bible College changes name to Welch College.



1965



Welch Library (Grizzard Building) is purchased for \$75,000.

1966

Academic Building is constructed at a cost of \$450,000.



1996



The college receives regional accreditation through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

2017

Welch College relocates from Nashville to Gallatin, Tennessee.



2001



J. Matthew Pinson is named the college's fifth president.

2017



Welch College confers the National Association's first regionally accredited graduate degrees on May 19, 2017.

1979



Charles A. Thigpen is named the college's third president.

At Welch College >>

Sharon Rodgers Named Welch College Registrar

Sharon Rodgers joined the Welch College family as part-time registrar in June, according to Dr. Matthew McAfee, Welch's provost. She will assume many of the responsibilities of former Registrar Matthew Bracey, who has transitioned to the role of Vice Provost.

Dr. Rodgers attended Welch from 1964-1966 and completed a B.S. in Elementary Education from Belmont University. She also holds the M.A.T. in Educational Leadership from Jacksonville University and the Ed.D. in Educational Leadership from Nova Southeastern University.

Rodgers has a long tenure in primary and secondary education. She has many years of experience in the classroom and has spent much of her career as a school administrator in both public and private institutions. For the past eight years, Dr. Rodgers served as elementary school principal at FWB Christian School in St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands.

Mrs. Rodgers, a native of Alma, Georgia, and niece of Welch founding president L. C. Johnson, has deep roots in the history of Welch College and the Free Will Baptist denomination. McAfee said, "I am thankful Dr. Rodgers has agreed to help us in the Registrar's Office. Her impressive resume in educational leadership, her love for Welch College, and her personal warmth make her a wonderful addition to the Academic Office. Dr. Rodgers will play an important role in positioning us for future growth." ■

Melinda Pinson Named to Staff and Adjunct Faculty

Melinda Pinson, wife of college president, Matt Pinson, began responsibilities as hospitality and donor relations liaison and adjunct instructor at the college, according to Dr. Jeff Crabtree, chairman of the Welch Board of Trustees. Her part-time post additionally revolves around design and campus beautification. Pinson will continue volunteering over and above her part-time role.

"For 15 years, Mrs. Pinson has served the college well in a volunteer capacity, overseeing high-level hospitality events, engaging in donor-relations with key college supporters, training and mentoring young women and ministry wives, consulting on design and beautification issues, teaching etiquette, and more," Crabtree said. "With the transition to the new campus, the scope of her duties has expanded, and the Board decided to formalize her existing role in this new, part-time position. The Board has always appreciated the grace and excellence Mrs. Pinson brings to the Welch College community, and we're excited about giving her an official title to match the important role she has played at Welch."

A graduate of Catawba College (B.A., sociology and philosophy) and Yale University (M.A.R., sociology of religion), she has been married to Welch president Matt Pinson for 23 years. Before the birth of their children, Anna and Matthew, Pinson served in numerous hospitality-industry roles. These included positions at Catawba, Yale, and Blowing Rock Assembly Grounds in Blowing Rock, North Carolina, and later executive director of a not-for-profit historic Victorian hotel and restaurant during her years as a pastor's wife in Georgia.

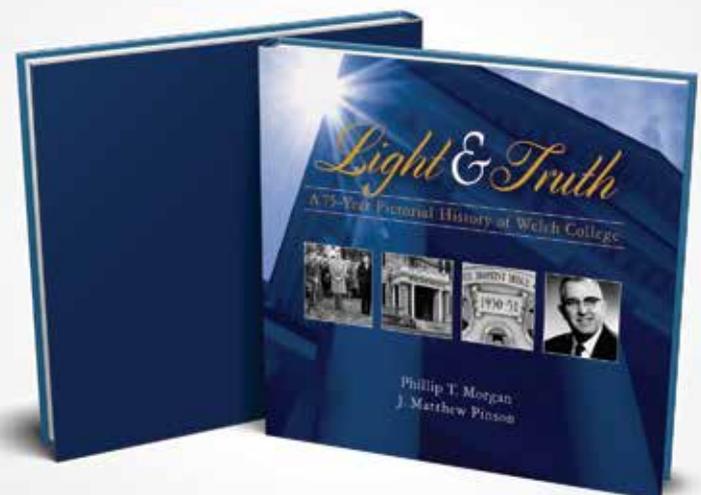
Pinson has written and spoken on hospitality, biblical womanhood, and ministry wives issues in a number of venues. ■

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Intersect >>

In each issue of *ONE Magazine*, Welch College contributes the Intersect column. In this issue, as the College celebrates its 75th year, the following special edition of Intersect recalls the brave young lady whose words were instrumental in bringing the school to reality.

Richer One College, Poorer One Student

By Phillip T. Morgan

In July 1939, the hot Texas sun looked down on Free Will Baptists from across the nation converging on the Free Will Baptist Church of Bryan. Many were excited about the upcoming meeting, but concern was also in the air.

Only four years earlier, in Nashville, Tennessee, the General Conference of Free Will Baptists joined with the Cooperative General Association of Free Will Baptists to form the National Association of Free Will Baptists. That year, the Committee on Education, the first board formed by the new association, recommended founding a denominational school in Nashville to begin classes in September 1936. The committee was approved to raise funds toward this end and to purchase property for the institution. Nearly four years later, the college was still only a dream.

The primary problem was funding. In the midst of the Great Depression, Free Will Baptists were slow to back their educational desires with the requisite finances. Though the Board of Education diligently promoted the work after three years, they had only \$1,000 in the bank and \$200 in pledges.

That first morning, during the 1939 business session, J. R. Davidson's report as chairman of the Board of Education was optimistic and encouraging, but the congregation must have been disappointed by the lack of progress. One young lady certainly was. After Davidson's report, Jean Welch, the 16-year-old daughter of John L and Mary Ann Welch, stood and asked for permission to address the gathered body on behalf of her generation.

The young woman emphasized her Free Will Baptist heritage, stating that she was "rocked in a Free Will Baptist cradle, [and] raised in a Free Will Baptist parsonage." She and her fellow students had talents to offer to the denomination, but they lacked training. "Where will they get this training?" she asked. "Methodists, Presbyterians, [and] other Baptists are not responsible for educating Free Will Baptist youth. You,

my dear people, are responsible."

Jean noted that a student's school deeply influences his or her denominational loyalty. "Will [our young people] be educated in Methodist schools to become Methodists?" she pointedly asked. Jean closed her short speech by asking if she would have a chance to study and train in a Free Will Baptist college.¹

As Jean took her seat, the ministers and delegates began to realize the full weight of the Free Will Baptist educational need. George Dunbar stood and offered prayer for the denomination's educational work. After Dunbar closed the prayer, "a great educational rally such as many had never experienced before" broke out. The congregation took up an offering of \$284.35 for the educational work, and \$1,725 in pledges were given (equal to \$5,000 and \$30,000 respectively in today's inflated dollars). This offering nearly tripled the fundraising efforts of the previous four years combined!

Several men and women mentioned Jean's speech in fundraising efforts over the following months and years. Her words touched the collective conscience of Free Will Baptists and spurred the denomination to commit fully to educational work. Just over three years later, Linton C. and Ruth Johnson turned onto Richland Avenue, stopping in front of a grey-stone building where Paul Ketteman, the school's first student, sat waiting on the steps. Welch College's 75-year history was about to commence.

The ending to this story is bittersweet, however. The young woman who ignited a passion for a Free Will Baptist college did not enjoy the fruit of her labor. Jean had to choose a college before 1942, ending up at Asbury College, a Methodist institution. While there, she met a fine young man training to become a Methodist minister, and they were soon married. Her speech left Free Will Baptists richer one college, but poorer one promising young person. **ONE**

About the Writer: Phillip Morgan graduated from Welch College in 2008 with a B.S. in Biblical Studies and Piano and Organ Performance. He recently completed an M.A. in History at Middle Tennessee State University and teaches at Welch College. Learn more: www.Welch.edu.

¹ Mary Ruth Wisehart, "Education in the Palmer Movement" (Presentation for Heritage Week at Free Will Baptist Bible College, February 3, 1993), 15, in NAFWB Historical Collection.

More Than Numbers

BY CLINT MORGAN

Of the estimated 7.2 billion people alive in the world today, 3.1 billion of them have little or no access to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. What a sobering statistic.

Terminology regarding the social groupings of these 7.2 billion inhabitants of our planet varies. Most mission agencies use the common terms people groups or ethnic groups. Fundamentally the same, both refer to a social grouping of people who share a common language and cultural norms.

What does this have to do with the future of International Missions?

IM focuses on obedience to Christ's directive to reach the nations, the Great Commission. Our mission statement affirms this, declaring: "We exist to labor with the Body of Christ to fulfill the Great Commission." We are all about reaching people with the gospel. To do that, it is imperative to know something about these people groups and grapple with our responsibility to get the good news of salvation to them. But, it is also important to recognize we are talking about indi-



viduals—moms and dads, sisters and brothers, aunts and uncles, grandparents, sons and daughters. These are people, not just people groups.

According to Joshua Project, a non-profit Christian research agency, 16,584 distinct people groups populate our world. That is a daunting number, especially when we understand someone has to learn their languages and understand their cultures to present the gospel in that context.

The good news is 9,851 of these groups have viable movements of Christianity among them. Movements large enough to evangelize the whole group—that is, if they are committed to doing so.

However, this also means 6,733 of the 16,584 fall into a category we call unreached people groups. This expression denotes an insufficient number of Christians living among the people group to effectively reach the others. Generally, if less than 2% of the population professes to be Christian, the chances are extremely slim they will be able to change the tide toward Christianity. And yet,

we must not forget what happened in the Book of Acts when a small number of committed apostles and believers turned the world upside down (Acts 17:6).

Let's take this one step further: of the 6,733 unreached people groups, over 3,000 fit into an even more disturbing category. They are unengaged unreached people groups. This means no known

church planting effort is going on among them.

I do not want to bore you with too many statistics, but let's consider one more. Of the 3,000+ unengaged unreached people groups, 321 have populations of more than 100,000. That means well over 32 million people have little hope of even hearing the gospel.

Many of you know our first mission field, pioneered by Laura Belle Barnard in 1935, was India. Laura Belle Barnard, Volena Wilson, Paul and Nelle Woolsey, Dan and Trula Cronk, and Carlisle and Marie Hanna diligently shared the Word of God, baptized new believers, trained and taught men and women, and established growing churches. Evangelists from India have shared the gospel and birthed Free Will Baptist churches in Nepal and Bhutan. Yet, India alone is home to 2,250 unreached people groups. India, where as many as ten thousand believers gather annually to celebrate their faith as Free Will Baptists, is still only 0.5% evangelical Christian. India is still a vast mission field.

According to one report, 538 evangelical churches exist for every unreached people group. Can we truly justify not making greater efforts in reaching the unreached? Let's bring it closer home. Worldwide, Free Will Baptists have about 3,500 churches. Is it not reasonable to believe we could—and should—play a significant role in reaching some of these 321 unengaged unreached people groups? Do we not have willing laborers in North America and around the world to engage some of these people groups?

It is up to us to go to God and ask His desire for Free Will Baptists in this matter. Which of these 3,000+ unreached people groups, or 321 unengaged unreached people groups, will He give us the privilege of introducing to the good news?

As a mission agency looking to the future, two extremely important questions lie before us: Where to go? and Who will go? I cannot answer these questions for the denomination, and most certainly not for individuals. But I can say with a great degree of conviction, I believe God knows where to go and who will be sent.

I have confidence God is calling a unique army of "sent ones" to go to the nations. I am equally confident Free Will Baptists from many nations will engage in this spiritual offensive against the gates of Hell.

We are in a new day when we, the home office and missionaries, are no longer solely responsible to strategize, mobilize, and resource our denominational outreach efforts. Several of our former mission fields (e.g. Cuba, Panama, Côte d'Ivoire, Brazil, and others) are seeing believers called to go out as missionaries.

The Cuban national church recently presented 13 missionary candidates to the National Association of Cuban FWB Churches. These obedient servants were charged to go to other nations and preach the gospel, make disciples, train leaders, and see churches emerge. These Cuban brothers and sisters have discerned God's direction for them to go to Uruguay, Angola, Côte d'Ivoire, Haiti, and other

places. Their focus? Go to all nations and make disciples.

FWB churches in Brazil have sent missionaries to Ireland and Turkey. They are anxiously anticipating, and even expecting, God to call an even greater number to go out. One missionary's focus: bring hope to Syrian refugees.

538 evangelical churches exist for every unreached people group.

Can we truly justify not making greater efforts in reaching the unreached?

The National Association of FWB Churches in Côte d'Ivoire, Africa, commissioned a missionary to plant churches in the neighboring country of Ghana. The Ivorian believers are joyfully giving sacrificially to get these willing servants to the field. Their focus? Plant churches among an unreached people group.

Our Free Will Baptist churches in Spain commit their moral and prayer support, as well as finances, to support a young Spanish couple working on a team in the southern part of the country. Their focus? Introduce immigrants to a message of compassion and hope.

At International Missions, we are partnering with our international brothers and sisters to labor together to fulfill the Great Commission. My heart's desire is to see Free Will Baptists around the world join in fasting and prayer to collectively discern the answers to the two questions above. I believe God will make it clear where we are to focus our efforts and direct some gifted believers to take the gospel where His name has never been spoken.

Maybe, just maybe, FWB international teams will be among those privileged to take the message of salvation to five, ten, or maybe even more, of the 321 unengaged unreached people groups. Perhaps it will be a FWB missionary who will take the gospel to that last tongue or nation. And then, the end will come.

Until then we need to be prayerfully, faithfully, and fully engaged in making sure every man, woman, boy, and girl has an opportunity to be filled with the hope of eternal life. **ONE**

WORST TERM EVER

By JAIMIE LANCASTER

Recently, I was asked to recap our last four-year term. The first thing that popped into my mind was “worst term ever.”

Let's review the “highlights,” and I think you'll agree with me:

- We lost four pastors in Uruguay due to relocation, resignation, or moral failure.
- Two deacons resigned. One passed away.
- Our teammates relocated to Spain.

We weathered several church “disagreements.”

And the list goes on.

Added to these events, we had been asked to change our ministry role. For a whole year we prayed, asking the tough questions regarding our gifting, our desire, and our ability to carry this out.

In March 2015, Tammy went to a missionary ladies' retreat for the weekend. During her absence, I sat down at the computer and came up with a three-year strategy to fulfill our new assignment and to transition from the old one. It was a masterpiece. Tammy returned from the meeting encouraged and excited. She had found peace regarding some things and remarked, “I feel like a ton of bricks has been lifted off my shoulders.”

On Monday morning, I sent my strategy to our regional director. He liked it and was anxious to see it in action. That night, as we laid down to rest, we felt it had been one of the best days of our term. We were both at peace and happy, with clear direction for the future. We had no idea that in less than 24 hours our whole world would turn upside down.

Tammy went to the hospital and found she had several masses (or knots) of intertwined veins and arteries in her brain. One of them had “oozed” into her brain, producing stroke-like symptoms. Doctors sent us directly to the States where we discovered she also had an abscessed diverticulitis. It took five long months to learn nothing really could be done. She would recover on her own over the next year.

We returned to Uruguay and tried to carry on. Tammy slept 18 hours a day. I cooked, cleaned, shopped, and did ministry. This was our first year. Eventually, Tammy got to the point she could host English classes and teach piano students in our home. She would rest during the days before, wake up an hour before the event, do the class then go back to bed. Two years later, we are still finding creative ways to minister around her health limitations.

Do you remember the ingenious strategy I crafted? Would you believe none of the things that happened were included in my version? God had other plans. You see, when I wrote my strategy, we had one person who could even be considered as a contact in our community. Two years later, over 60 people are involved in our lives as a direct result of Tammy's illness.

During and after our time in the States, people from our community offered assistance and encouragement. These "not-yet-believers" opened their homes, resources, and arms to us. One friend, upon finding we'd needed to fly back to the States for treatment, offered to pay for our tickets. (Thankfully, these were covered by insurance.) Our neighbor offered her back yard and

grill area for my birthday party so we wouldn't have to prepare to host guests. When I told her we were going to keep it simple and not overwork Tammy, she called her husband, invited her family, and they threw a birthday party for me. Yet another neighbor, hearing we were looking for a place to stay four nights before our return to the States, asked us to be "test guests" in the bed and breakfast she was about to open.

The sleeping, the drastic reduction in ministry time, and ill health—things we saw only as limitations—God worked through each of them to open doors and demonstrate His power and glory. He has used these limitations and hard times to mold us, changing our minds, our hearts, and the way we work. We can attest to the truth of Jesus' words to the Apostle Paul, "My strength is made perfect in weakness."

While our term started as the "worst term ever," we left Uruguay encouraged and ready to get back so we can see what God has in store for His work there. Are we making plans for our next term? Of course. Do we think God will work in ways and events that we never planned? Without a doubt! **ONE**

About the Writer: Currently on stateside assignment, Jaimie and Tammy Lancaster have served in Uruguay for almost 20 years. For more information, visit www.FWBGO.com.

A BLUEPRINT FOR YOUTH MINISTRY

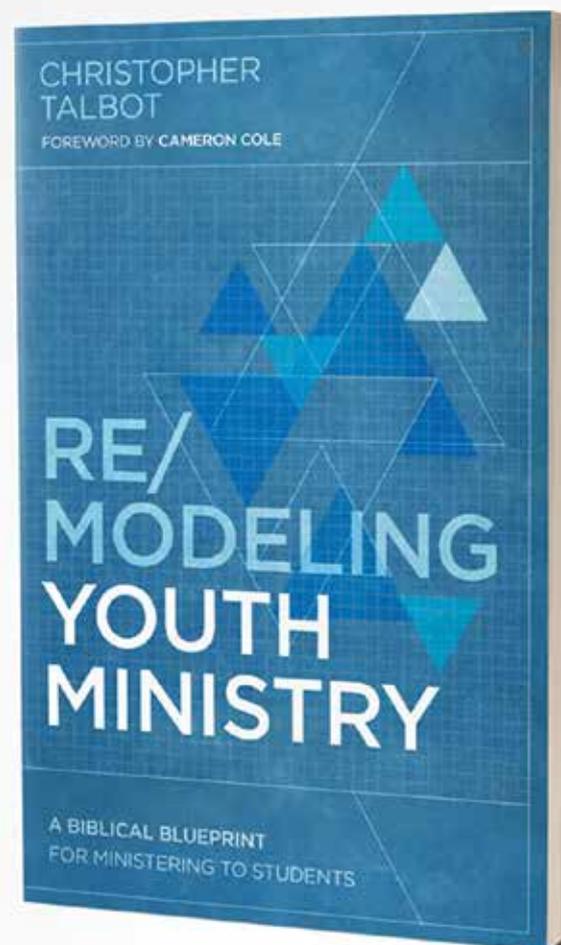
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Around the World >>

Jimmy Aldridge Called Home

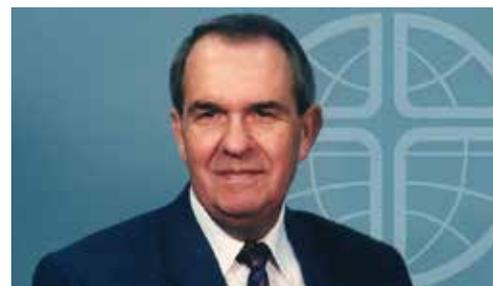
Jasper, Alabama—Jimmy Aldridge, former missionary to Côte d’Ivoire, entered his eternal home late Sunday evening, July 9. The 79-year-old, who entered hospice a couple of weeks earlier after a serious fall, battled Alzheimer’s for several years.

Born January 18, 1938, he accepted Christ as Savior at the age of 13. After graduating from Welch College in 1960, he attended Columbia Bible College for one and a half years. Appointed as missionaries in October 1962, Jimmy and his wife Janie, an R.N., departed in July of 1963 for language school. Once in Ivory Coast, they served primarily in the

Bondoukou area.

Jimmy and Janie shared responsibilities in the French-speaking Bible institute in Bondoukou. Jimmy worked to establish preaching points throughout the area. The couple served in Ivory Coast four terms for a total of 22 years.

During their stateside assignment in 1984, Jimmy was offered the newly established position of overseas secretary for the Mission. The role included counseling, advising, and troubleshooting for the various mission fields. For 15 years, the Alabama native made Nashville his home as he served in the Mis-



sion office. He retired in 1999 and returned to his home in Alabama.

Jimmy leaves behind his wife Janie as well as extended family members. The funeral was held in Jasper, Alabama, on Wednesday, July 12. Janie requested donations to International Missions to complete a church building in Ivory Coast.



Ivorian Leaders Visit States

Madame Solange Kambiré, president of the Free Will Baptist women’s organization in Côte d’Ivoire, and Vice-president Madame Deborah Amiezi traveled to the States for a month-long visit in July. *Femmes de Bonnes Nouvelles* (Women of the Good News) sponsors an annual evangelistic outreach, bi-annual women’s retreat, training for women and teens, and raises funds for a national project. Currently, the national project is a women’s center to provide safe housing for girls who leave villages for education and training in the city of Bondoukou.

The women participated in local, district, state, and national Women Active for Christ meetings throughout the States. As they traveled (experiencing the hospitality of women in West Virginia, Tennessee, Kentucky, and North Carolina), the women shared their testimonies and thanked American women for sending and supporting missionaries in Côte d’Ivoire. They also raised funds to help a Cuban doctor with flight costs for her and her family who plan to work full-time at the Doropo Hospital.

August 2017 Missionary Account Deficits

Antioch, TN—These missionary accounts remain underfunded and in need of additional monthly support.

As of August 31, 2017, seven missionaries have deficit accounts (one more than last month):

India Ministries/Carlisle Hanna....	-\$159,989.17	Neil & Mandi Morgan.....	-\$11,130.57	Kenneth & Rejane Eagleton.....	-\$2,834.02
Nathan & Linda Snow	-\$36,409.30	Don & Ruth McDonald	-\$8,515.06		
Jerry & Barbara Gibbs.....	-\$16,981.81	Tyler & Kellie Penn	-\$4,076.34		

Unfortunately, Kenneth and Rejane Eagleton moved from “low and in need of additional support” to the deficit category.

Though not deficit, ten account balances are extremely low and in need of additional support:

Jeff & Susana Turnbough.....	\$1,907.19	Dale & Sandra Bishop	\$7,001.77	Anthony & Lea Edgmon.....	\$11,334.89
Lázaro & Ariadna Riesgo	\$3,838.52	Matt & Cristina Price.....	\$7,420.60	Steve & Lori Torrison.....	\$12,428.72
Rusty & Brenda Carney.....	\$4,091.12	Dennis & Carol Teague	\$7,770.08		
David & Angie Outlaw	\$4,998.13	Jaimie & Tammy Lancaster	\$9,753.19		

Over the last several months, one of the accounts listed as “low and in need of additional support” has moved to deficit each month. New names are added to the “needy” category. Please support our missionaries in prayer and finances, so they can focus on their ministries.

Snapshots Around the World

Panama—Recognizing the importance of Christian education and training, Panamanian Free Will Baptists recently formed a Christian education commission. The group conducted a workshop on the Chame seminary campus to inform local church representatives from around the country of planned activities and gain insight into local church needs.

Cuba—For many years, Los Cedros de Libano (Cedars of Lebanon) seminary trained Cuban Free Will Baptists pastors, evangelists, and leaders. As evangelistic efforts expanded to the other side of the island, transportation and other resources limited who could receive training. Professor Boris Sarlabous recently announced an extension nucleus in the Jiguani Free Will Baptist Church in the province of Granma. Almost 600 miles from the seminary, 12 students began training in July.

India—In July, India granted Carlisle Hanna a visa for a year. He departed India on August 11 with plans to return early in 2018.

Côte d'Ivoire—The Free Will Baptist church in Bougou (northern Ivory Coast) is growing! Having run out of space in their current building, they are building a much larger facility.

Côte d'Ivoire—E-TEAMers assisted the Abobo Free Will Baptist Church in beautifying their rented facility. The Abobo congregation rents a storefront building in an area of Abidjan with a high concentration of Muslim inhabitants. Congregants replaced the leaky roof and tiled the floor. In June, E-TEAMers assisted church members in painting the inside and outside of the building.

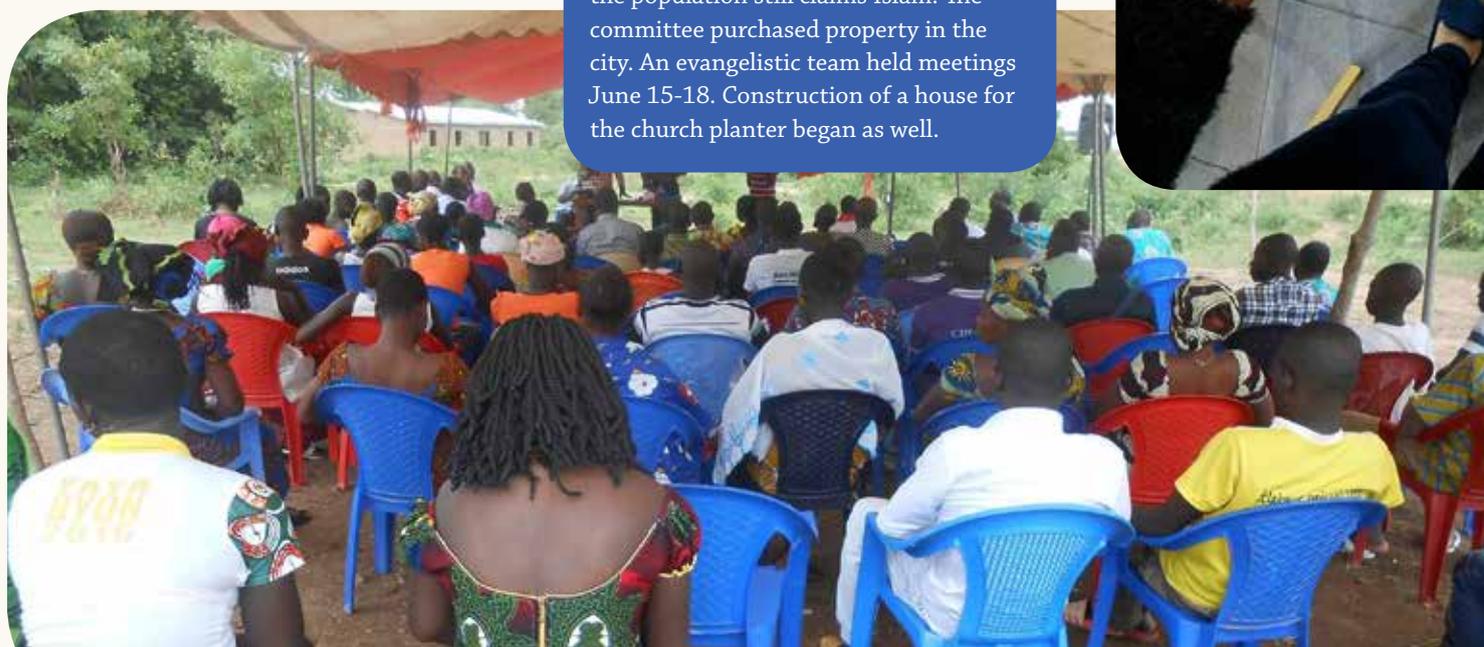


Brazil—After holding two services each Sunday to accommodate the number of attendees, the Jaboticabal Free Will Baptist Church in Brazil has begun a new building. Pastor Jeancarlo Achê hopes the new building will encourage more growth.

Cuba—Cuban Free Will Baptists interested in medical missions concluded the Perspectives Course of training in July. Thirty-five physicians, nurses, and other medical personnel covered the biblical basis of missions, cultural differences, language learning, cross-cultural communications, world religions, and more.

Côte d'Ivoire—The missions committee of the National Association of Free Will Baptist Churches of Côte d'Ivoire designated the historic town of Kong in the north of the country as an area for evangelism and church planting. Once an Islamic stronghold, the majority of the population still claims Islam. The committee purchased property in the city. An evangelistic team held meetings June 15-18. Construction of a house for the church planter began as well.

Uruguay—Ladies from Uruguayan churches gathered for their second annual women's retreat July 3-5. Ariadna Riesgo, a missionary from Cuba and Panama, spoke to the ladies concerning their worth in Christ over the course of five sessions.





MISSIONARIES

Should Tell Stories

By Jeff Turnbough, Ph.D.

Several years ago, while serving as a missionary to Spain, I was back in the United States visiting a supporting church. Just before the service began, the pastor came and said, “You are only going to have about 30 minutes. I just want you to preach. Don’t worry about talking about your work.”

Wanting to honor my pastor friend’s wishes, I didn’t share about the work, and I preached a message, without giving my missionary report. Immediately after the service, a long-term supporter and leader of the Women Active for Christ came straight to me and said, “Why didn’t you share about your ministry? We have been praying for you and we were really looking forward to hearing how God is working there!” All I could do was apologize and remember how important it is for me as a missionary to give a report of what God is doing where I work.

Remember what the first missionaries in the book of Acts

did? “And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work, which they fulfilled. And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles” (Acts 14:26-27).

When the Apostle Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch—the church that sent them out as missionaries, they told stories about what God had been doing through their ministry. One real gift the missionary brings to the local church is current stories of God working in the places where he/she ministers. These reports of what God is doing around the world not only encourage and challenge the people of God to support His global work, but also make them more aware of and involved in God’s work locally.

Telling stories of God at work builds and encourages God's people.

Acts provides a biblical precedent for missionaries to give a report of what God is doing (i.e., tell stories). Following the example of Paul and Barnabas, it is helpful to arrange a specific time for returning missionaries to tell stories and answer questions (Sunday School, part of the service, small groups, etc.). If the missionary is going to deliver a message during the worship time, including powerful stories about God's work can help illustrate biblical principles applied in life.

Pastors, encourage missionaries to tell stories of what God is doing where they work. Missionaries, prepare good short stories of how you see God working in and through your ministry, even if the place you serve is highly resistant, with little visible fruit. If you do not know how to do that, attend the Leadership Matters Course (www.wetrainleaders.org) or obtain some other training to equip you to prepare and tell short stories of God working in and through your life and ministry.

After one of our missionaries attended LMC, he began telling stories to his supporting churches. A leader wrote, "I don't know what you teach in LMC, but after hearing the difference in our missionary's presentation, I support it."

Just this week I received this note from another missionary who attended LMC: "Yesterday, my husband and I had the opportunity to share about our work for 45 minutes during a church service. In our preparation, we told our stories! People gave us compliments on our growth in public speaking."

What made the difference? Stories.

God's Word is powerful. Missionaries see the Word of God impact people's lives in meaningful and real ways. Telling stories of God at work builds and encourages God's people, and ultimately, helps extend God's Kingdom in and through His people around the world, working together to fulfill the Great Commission. **ONE**

About the authors: Jeff and Susan Turnbough are raising support for the ministry. IM has assigned them to train missionaries and national pastors and leaders on the front lines of God's work, via the International Training Alliance: www.wetrainleaders.org.

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65	4.7%
70	5.1%
75	5.8%
80	6.8%
85	7.8%
90	9.0%

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The Work Goes On

By Lynette Morgan

I still remember the day in early January 1962, as an 11-year-old girl, when I first saw Doropo, Côte d'Ivoire, West Africa. It had taken our family of five, riding in an air-conditioner-less VW van, two long, fatiguing days to get to this remote village. Doropo, 400 miles into the interior, was as far from the capital of Abidjan as you could get before entering the next African country, then Upper Volta. All but 50 miles had been on dirt roads: from teeth-jarring washboards to brown sandy ruts and dusty red "fareways" that left us covered from head to toe like red, powdered-sugar donuts.

By that evening, when we finally crossed the precarious wood planks spanning a dried-up gully, we were ready to get somewhere, anywhere. But we could not imagine what awaited us. As we entered the big village of mud huts and small cement buildings, we saw people lining the road, waving and smiling and welcoming us, like crowds awaiting the president. The stream of people continued all the way up the half-mile hill to the piece of property given to the Mission by the village. When we stepped out of the van, village chiefs and dignitaries were waiting, along with missionary Dan



Merkh, who had been building our house. The people of the village were so excited to have the first-ever doctor in this remote area. For us, we were finally home.

Those first months were spent learning about our new surroundings and its people. My mom finished teaching my brothers and me—grades 3, 6, and 8—so we could all go off to boarding school in the fall. Mom and Dad, still brain-challenged from learning French, started learning the Lobi language. Due to the immense physical needs, my dad began treating patients from a tiny trailer while the clinic was constructed. Mom, a lab technician, was his “nurse,” boiling needles and syringes on the gas stove and giving injections. All the while we were falling in love with Africa and its people.

After my brothers and I went away to school, the clinic was completed, and my mother and father began to see patients daily. Because we didn’t have electricity, a battery-operated cassette player shared the gospel in various languages as patients waited hours to see the doctor. The reputation of the medical center spread, and before long, my parents were seeing an average of 100 patients a day. The sick were treated and healed, and the gospel was preached. The call my dad had received was being obeyed: “Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give” (Matthew 10:8).

On Sundays, we continued the Bible classes Dan and Margaret Merkh had started with the children, and little by little, adults also began following “God’s road.” My dad, invited by those he treated at the clinic, began riding his motorcycle to villages near Doropo to preach. Mom taught sewing/Bible classes. The Paynes and the Lees joined the team, and the work grew among the Lobis, the tribe on which we were focused.

By the time my brother Lynn and I went to college in 1966 and 1968, we had sensed the call of God on our lives to return as missionaries among the Lobis.

Lynn and his wife Ramona and two children arrived in Doropo in 1973. Sadly, due to illness they had to return to the States in 1977. Once the illness had been identified and treated, the family went to France, planting a church in the town of Lorient during six years on that field.



Fifty-five years ago, my family drove into that dark area where the light of the gospel had not reached, and we began shining that light.

After a year of language study in France, Clint and I and our two little boys arrived in Doropo in August 1978. I had finished my R.N. training and eagerly looked forward to working with my dad in the hospital. But only five months after our arrival, my parents felt the Lord leading them back to the States, and we moved into their house in Doropo to carry on the work. My dad returned to the States and taught at Free Will Baptist Bible College for the next 17 years, pouring himself into countless young people seeking God’s will for their lives.

Clint and I ministered in Doropo for eight years, and our family increased from four to six during that time. Clint was involved in village and church ministries. I spent my time helping at the hospital, teaching women and children, and home-schooling our own children. But in 1987, the Lord impressed upon us the need for a

Bible institute to train leaders—not only Lobis from our growing churches but for Koulongs and Agnis from the other areas where we had missionaries. We left “home” and moved to Bouna, 50 miles south, to start a Bible institute with Eddie Payne and Mike Cousineau.

In 2002, 35 men had graduated from the Bible institute, men of God who began pastoring and leading churches. Again, God changed the direction of our lives when we were asked by the Mission to begin research to develop a strategy for reaching those in closed and restricted-access countries. The Hanna Project was born out of that effort. Clint became the director, and in 2007 we joined the first THP team sent by the mission, settling in the south of France to reach Muslims from North Africa.

In March of this year, Clint and I returned to Doropo with a THP mission team. It had been seven years since I had been there. The village has now spread all the way up the hill to the medical station, where the newer buildings stand as a lighthouse of hope, health, and healing. My dad’s dream of a hospital staffed and run by African personnel has come true. During the week we were there, our team of nurses partnered with the hospital staff, and together we performed 16 surgeries and treated hundreds of patients in the village. At the same time, the gospel was preached, both by us and a Lobi evangelist, a graduate of the Bible institute.

Fifty-five years ago, my family drove into that dark area where the light of the gospel had not reached, and we began shining that light. Today, patients continue to be treated, healed, and the gospel boldly preached. God has planted and continues to grow His Church in Lobi Land. **ONE**

About the Writer: Veteran missionary Lynette Morgan is daughter of pioneer medical missionaries Dr. LaVerne and Lorene Miley.

Along with her husband Clint, she served with excellence in Côte d’Ivoire from 1976-2005, and in France from 2007 to 2011.

On February 10, 2011, Clint became general director of International Missions.

Couped Up

By Bill and Brenda Evans

It's amazing what two people talk about when they're confined in a 122-cubic-foot cell for 25 days. Forget that it's a six-year-old, brown Buick. It's still a tight little space. A vehicle and no bars, but after a few days, it feels like a cell. You are couped up, the air is exponentially second-hand, and you can barely see through the bug-guts windshield.

We planned to be couped up. Drive west and north from Kentucky through 12 states and four Canadian provinces in 25 days, and fly by the seat of our pants while doing it. That last idea was my husband Bill's, by which he meant we would be free to be wherever we wanted to be, whenever we wanted to be there. No appointments, no hotel reservations, no GPS, just two stacks of Triple-A maps and free-range driving for 7,200 miles. "Great plan," he said.

I thought it was hairy. I like to know where I'm going to sleep before I get there. I foresaw an unfavorable future: brown cuboid, on side of remote road, 200 miles from Podunk, no moon, no Wi-Fi, no bed, no bathroom, no sleep.

"I'm worried," I whined.

"Just trust me," Bill said, and flashed his biggest, toothiest grin. Bill has always wanted to be a pioneer. Flying by the seat of his pants would be close to pioneering. So we set out, couped up with our maps in our

cuboid on wheels. At first, we did all the predictable things in several of the Lower 48, then went up and over the international line into four Canadian provinces, and eventually down again into our own Lower 48 to see more things.

We also talked. Sometimes, profound generalizations, like South Dakota's bugs are bigger than Wyoming's and Montana's because they make gimongus blood-and-gut splatters on our windshield. Fresh or dried, British Columbia's honey crisp apples are worth every dollar. Ice cream is one of man's premier inventions.

Other times, our jaws dropped in silence: a glistening red Kokanee salmon flailing upstream in an icy British Columbia river to drop her eggs and die; an eerie valley of stony Inukshuks pointing the way past dinosaur bones; the glassy water of Lake Moraine shimmering like blue fire.

Eventually, we ate our words. Claiming to be bad tourists who didn't fall for ads touting three-headed grizzlies and five-pound gems, we became utterly vulnerable to words. In the middle of somewhere, a red casino sign blazed: CHEAP FOOD. We were hungry. It was way past noon. Breakfast had been dry and hard. The next town was 60 miles west. We could die before we got there. So we walked into the casino's garish clamor of sounds and lights, past silent old women pulling handles and black-suited men whirling roulette wheels, and sat down to eat.

Back in the car, I said, "Why did we do that?"

"We were hankering," Bill said. So, couped up in our Buick,



hankering, whether spoken or unspoken, became an operative word for us.

Ice cream, for example. Our brown Buick made Bill hanker for the creamy chocolate stuff. One day we sped along chanting in 4/4 time: I want—I need—ice cream. Clap. Clap. (Repeat and repeat.) Wilson's on Wisconsin's Door Peninsula was superb; 1,000 calories per scoop, no doubt, but superb. I had caramel something or other. Bill had chocolate. A few days later, near the border of Manitoba and Saskatchewan, we spied flashy words on a petrol convenience store—f'real™ milkshakes—and bought in. Despite ads for authentic milkshakes and real ingredients, f'real™ was bad.

"Suckered, weren't we?" Bill said and slurped out his last blob of chocolate. "Yeah, hankering again," I mumbled and spooned something cold and faux pink down my gullet. We mused about hankering and wants and needs as we rambled on toward Al Capone's Tunnels and a well-advertised fudge store in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan.

"*I want* is a powerful phrase," Bill said.

"Yeah, blurs into *I need* when we actually don't need it," I added. Bill pressed the gas pedal harder and set the cruise control while I googled Bible passages on greed and gluttony.

"We should try harder," he urged, as the Buick evened out at 75.

In Moose Jaw, with 20 other tourists, we followed the leader, an actor who took us into the tunnels and let us in on Capone's Canadian bootlegging life during the U.S. Prohibition. Five or six other actors joined him, and we were entertained, which we'd had a hankering for after being cooped up so long. Afterwards, at Chocolate Moose Fudge Factory, half a dozen flies buzzed and settled on the chocolate and maple and peanut butter fudge, so we grudgingly abstained, climbed back in our brown cuboid, and headed west to Alberta.

"I really, really wanted maple fudge," I grumbled. "Canadians know their maple. Just look at their flag."

"Yeah, but the flies beat us to it. We should've stuck with ice cream," Bill said.

And so we did at Banff, where the Canadian Rockies were beyond spectacular, and the ice cream was good. We licked and slurped and watched magpies swoop around us, squealing that we should share. In black and white feathers and iridescent swaths of blue, they flicked past, collecting crumbs, trinkets, or whatever caught their eyes. They acted familiar, like gluttonous, stingy little gatherers. If it's edible, gulp it. If it's not, secrete it in your stash.

At Peachland, British Columbia, in the fruit and wine Okanagan Valley, we decided to forego peaches and buy ice cream. The real stuff again, licked off the cone in the sunshine at a picnic table by Lake Okanagan. The lake, the breeze, the ice cream were lovely, we said, a word we pull out only when something is extra-special good.

Several days later, we showed our passports again, slipped back into the Lower 48 at the northern tip of Idaho and drove on to Montana and Wyoming for more big sites in nature and history. Later at little Sundance, Wyoming, we found ice cream. I noshed on huckleberry. Bill had more chocolate, this time with walnuts. We photographed the tiny jail because in 1887 Harry Alonzo Longabaugh hankered for a gun, horse, and saddle, stole them, and landed there. While there, he decided to become Sundance Kid. Later, he took up with Butch Cassidy.

Free donuts and coffee for newlyweds was one of dozens of colorful signs we began to see after Little Big Horn. A hundred miles later, we turned in at Wall Drug in western South Dakota and became paying customers. Bill bolted right past ice cream—straight to John Wayne. Cowboys snag him every time. He held up a burnt orange tee shirt with "Old Men Rule" blazed on the front and John Wayne's face all over the back. "Forget pioneer. You look like a cowboy to me," I said. He bought it.

Despite John Wayne on his back, Bill did not give up his yen to pioneer. At Rushmore, under the granite gaze of four dead presidents, he bought a book titled *Pioneer Women* and handed it to me. "Hankering die hard," I said.

"Every pioneer man needs a pioneer woman," he whispered and winked at me. We were near the end. We had begun our 25-day meanderings on Wisconsin's Door Peninsula. Beautiful and historical, the peninsula juts 80 miles north into Lake Michigan. We had read about its quaint villages and rocky beaches, about Wilson's ice cream and a Swedish restaurant where goats graze on the grass roof and servers pass you lingonberry jam, about a famous water passageway at the northern tip called Death's Door. We hankered to go, so we did.

Our last "official" stop was at mako sica, as Lakota tribal people call it, the Badlands of South Dakota. Cooped up and weary, we arrived late that morning, mentioned the irony of Death's Door at the beginning and Badlands at the end, unfolded from our Buick cell, and let Badlands draw us in.

A thousand eroded sawtooth steeps and cliffs rose from sienna plains, harsh and beguiling in muted reds, browns, and yellows. God-made ledges and sterile shelves slanted down into bleak flats and spread away from us farther than we could see. We bathed in mako sica's stillness, its barrenness. Bill spied movement. Through binoculars, he spotted a cluster of bighorn sheep in a dry wash, eking out dry grasses and sedges just to live. Mothers with lambs nibbled and watched, guardedly sating their hunger. A ram rested nearby.

A few hours later, we climbed into our brown cuboid and headed east, as filled and at ease as the resting bighorn. All hankering was gone, except one—home! **ONE**

Brown on **Green** >>

Required Minimum Distributions

Older individuals are required to make required minimum distributions (RMD) from their IRA and other retirement plans in the year following the year they turn 70 ½ and every year after until their death. Anyone failing to make this distribution is hit with a 50% penalty. If you are required to withdraw \$10,000 and fail to do so, the penalty is \$5,000. The purpose of this requirement is the government wants you to expose these distributions to tax. Retirement plans (other than a Roth) accrue pre-taxed earnings in the plan, and individuals are allowed tax-free contributions. Therefore, the IRS wants to collect on deferred tax revenue during retirement.

For many, this is no problem. They need to make distributions larger than their RMD anyway, just to have adequate retirement income. Some want to preserve as much as possible in their IRAs and retirement plans to pass on to their heirs. Unfortunately, even if it does pass to your children after you die, they also will have to pay tax on distributions.

Retirement accounts are one of the best choices to fund bequests from your estate. A charitable organization does not pay income tax. The process is

simple and requires only that you change the beneficiary of your retirement plan.

One way to preserve the balance in your retirement account is by using dividend stock. During the early years of distribution, some of your RMD can be paid out as dividends, thus preserving a portion of the principal. Careful selection of dividend stocks that grow their dividend every year will allow this process to continue, even as the RMDs grow in your later years.

The top 50 dividend-paying stocks from the S & P 500 have been paying dividends for 25 or more years straight, and have increased their dividend every year. The average dividend yield on this group is around 2.5%, and the average increase in dividends each year is 5%. This means the 2.5% yield on the stock purchased today will be yielding over 6% in 20 years. (These stocks are used as an example and not necessarily being endorsed.) This type of investing could be used to preserve the value of your IRA or retirement plan. Consider preserving your retirement assets and using them to make a bequest to endow a ministry.

ONE

Individuals older than 70 ½ must withdraw the following Required Minimum Distributions percentages each year to avoid a 50% penalty:

RMD %	Age
3.92%	71
4.07%	72
4.22%	73
4.39%	74
4.57%	75
4.76%	76
4.95%	77
5.18%	78
5.4%	79
5.65%	80
5.92%	81
6.21%	82
6.54%	83
6.9%	84
7.25%	85
7.63%	86
8.06%	87
8.55%	88
9.09%	89
9.62%	90

About the Writer: David Brown, CPA, is director of Free Will Baptist Foundation, which granted a half-million dollars to Free Will Baptist ministries this year. Send your financial questions to David at david@nafwb.org or call 877-336-7575.

Blessing,

NOT A BURDEN

By Chris Compton

On June 22, NFL Quarterback Derek Carr signed a five-year, \$125 million contract with the Oakland Raiders. With this contract, Carr set the record for the NFL's highest annual pay to date at \$25 million. When I heard about his new contract, I thought, "What would be the first thing I would do with that kind of money?"

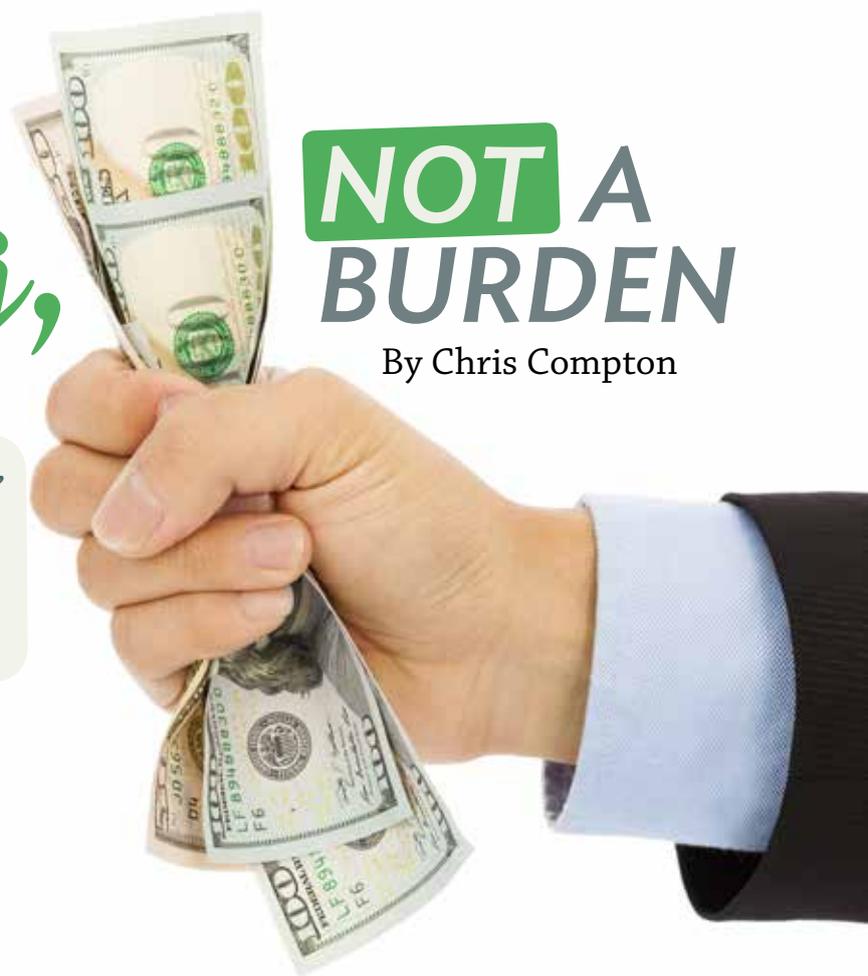
What would you do?

A reporter asked Derek Carr that question. And here is his response: "The first thing I'll do is pay my tithe like I have since I was in college getting \$700 on a scholarship check. That won't change. I'll do that...the exciting thing for me money wise, honestly, is that this money is going to help a lot of people. I'm very thankful to have it, that it's in our hands, because it's going to help people—not only in this country but a lot of countries around the world."

Carr's candid and refreshing response reminded me why I made the decision many years ago to be fully committed to tithing. It is not about the money; it is about obedience and what God can do with the money. It is about the people who will be impacted for eternity. When you have that perspective, tithing becomes easier and natural.

Over the course of my career since graduating from college in 1997, I have changed jobs several times. With each change came a salary change. Sometimes, it went up, and other times it went down. No matter the salary, I am going to tithe like I always have done.

Sometimes tithing presented a financial challenge for my family. I have to admit I have been tempted not to tithe at times. I vividly remember sitting in front of my computer with my checkbook in hand, thinking of ways I could use the tithe money to pay this bill or that bill. But I continued to tithe, and God continued to bless and provide in remarkable ways. I have never missed a bill or a meal as a result of tithing. God rewards those faithful to Him in His way and time.



I also have learned over the years that giving the Lord what is His already is not intended to be a burden but a blessing. God is not trying to rob us of the joy of spending our money. Rather, He wants us to experience the joy of tithing and the peace that comes from trusting Him to take care of us. That is His specialty.

Whether we have been tithing faithfully for 50 years or 50 days, whether we struggle to tithe or do it automatically, we must remember tithing is not losing but gaining. We gain the joy of honoring God, helping others, exhibiting God's heart, demonstrating the Lord's salvation, advancing His kingdom, and trusting His provision. When that is our perspective, we will experience the reality that tithing is a blessing, not a burden. **ONE**

About the writer: Chris Compton is director of communication for the Board of Retirement. Learn more: www.BoardofRetirement.com.

UNEQUALLY YOKED...

Savers and Spenders

By John Brummitt

I AM ALWAYS AMAZED AT THE POWER OF SCRIPTURE, AND HOW IT IS RELEVANT TO EVERY AREA OF OUR LIVES.

The other day, while listening to a podcast on being married to a spender, a familiar verse popped into my head: “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?” (2 Corinthians 6:14) True, this verse is not talking about money habits but relationships between believers and non-believers. Sometimes, though, when it comes to money we may feel “unequally yoked” in our marriage. Let me explain.

In many marriages, one spouse is a saver and the other a spender. Both have positives and negatives, and being one or the other doesn't make you better than your husband or wife. Spenders usually live in the moment and don't worry much about the future. They think, “Tomorrow will take care of tomorrow.” In contrast, savers live for the future, focusing on things to come rather than what they could be doing now. One has more fun; the other has more security.



So, what should you do if you find yourself married to “the opposite”?

Love him or her. First, remember you chose to marry this person along with his or her spending or saving mindset. Don’t regard your spouse in a negative light because of his mindset. Both perspectives have positive and negative aspects. Money is a touchy subject, even for married couples. Statements about saving or spending habits carry a lot of weight, and your spouse can easily feel judged—even accused—if you do not approach money conversations in a way beneficial to everyone.

Talk to one another. If you are married to a spender, chances are you may have trouble making ends meet. If you are married to a saver, you may feel as though you never get to enjoy the fruits of your labor. The key is true for every successful marriage—talk to each other. If you feel your spouse’s spending is putting you in a financial bind and making you stressed and worried, telling him or her is the first step. The same is true for the spending spouse who is frustrated by never enjoying God’s financial blessings. Remember, this is a touchy subject, and no one wants to end up sleeping on the couch or sharing the doghouse with Fido, so be respectful and stick to the topic for the conversation.

Find common ground. For spenders, the hardest thing in the world is putting money into the bank and letting it sit. For savers, it is spending money on non-necessary items. How do you get spenders to save and savers to spend? Find common ground and work together. After a candid conversation, you should have a good idea about your spouse’s financial needs and desires. So, fashion a budget that gives a little to both. Rein in spending on smaller items to purchase a bigger item such as a vacation. This allows the spender to enjoy the fruits of his labor while giving the saver some time to prepare for the expense.

Being unequally yoked when it comes to your finances can feel like the tension between a believer and a non-believer, or you can enjoy the harmonious balance of a team working towards the same goal. As a team, pull together to enjoy the fruits of your labor. Having a strong financial plan will always help your marriage, especially when it addresses the needs of both saver and spender. **ONE**

About the writer: John Brummitt became director of the Board of Retirement in January 2016. He graduated in 2011 with an MBA from Tennessee Tech University. A 2004 graduate of Welch College, he has been with the Board of Retirement since the spring of 2006. Learn more about retirement options: www.BoardofRetirement.com.

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Personal first-aid kit
Toilet paper
Wash cloths
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Lessons From LUTHER

By Paul V. Harrison



By Ferdinand Pauwels - flickr, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=3767049>

October 31 marks the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. That movement was launched when Martin Luther, a monk and priest in the Roman Catholic Church, nailed 95 statements for debate on the chapel door at Wittenberg. Those theses and the 121 volumes Luther penned over the years challenged the corruptions of his church and summoned it back to biblical Christianity. We can learn important lessons from Luther's life and thought.

First, Luther reminds us God can greatly use Christians with a high level of learning. After studies at the University of Erfurt, he went on to earn a doctorate in theology at Wittenberg and, more importantly, he was a life-long student of truth. He gave himself to learning languages, especially those of Scripture. Skilled in his native German, he also worked easily in Greek, Hebrew, and Latin. He stated of the biblical languages: "Now if God did not despise them but chose them above all others for His Word, then we too ought to honor them above all others . . . The languages are the sheath in which this sword of the Spirit is contained."

Not only a linguist, Luther was also a theologian, philosopher, translator, and historian. He labored over Plato, Aristotle, and the other great philosophers and could debate using medieval methods of argumentation with the best of scholars. He was

conversant with the Church Fathers, often quoting Augustine (his favorite), Ambrose, Jerome, and Chrysostom, and he held these men in high esteem.

In light of this, we should remember that Paul did not say “not any” but “not many wise men after the flesh” are called (1 Corinthians 1:26). The Apostle himself was so highly trained a Roman ruler charged that “much learning” had made him insane (Acts 26:24). Moses was “learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians” (Acts 7:22). God is pro-knowledge.

We Free Will Baptists have sometimes forgotten this, looking askance at those with book learning. While Jesus’ disciples were unlearned, and many who have followed in their footsteps no doubt have been greatly used, others who have braved the tempests of academia have also been greatly blessed by God. When we consider anointing by the Spirit at odds with education, we do a disservice to those who seek both, and insult the God of truth. Luther reminds us learning need not be a liability but can be a mighty tool in the hand of God.

Second, Luther reminds us Christian tradition should be evaluated by and subordinated to the Word of God. Over time, beliefs become enshrined to the point where those who call them into question are vilified. The Roman Catholic Church, with its emphasis on tradition, was especially hostile toward anyone who questioned its authority. Luther faced this firsthand. While holding the church’s historic positions in high regard, he correctly maintained that Scripture must take preeminence over tradition:

“No one will believe how great an ordeal it is and how severe a shock when a person first realizes that he must believe and teach contrary to the fathers,” Luther later mused, “especially when he sees that so many excellent, intelligent, and learned men, yes, the best of them taught thus, and that the majority of the people in the world shared their views . . . But in spite of all this, that one man, my dear Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, must have greater weight with me than all the holiest people on earth put together. Yea, He must also outweigh all the angels in heaven (Gal. 1:8) if they teach anything at variance with the Gospel, or if they add to or detract from the doctrine of the divine Word . . . It is truly difficult to subdue one’s own heart in these matters, to deviate from people who are so highly respected and who bear such a holy name—indeed, from the church herself—and no longer to have any confidence and faith in the church’s teaching. . . . This truly bewilders and dismays a person. But after all is said and done, I must say that I dare not accept whatever any man might say; for he may be a pious and God-fearing man and yet be mistaken and err. . . . Therefore we should place no reliance in any of the fathers or in their writings, but we should crawl under the wings of our Brood Hen, the Lord Jesus, and depend solely on Him.”

Luther’s stance is captured by the Latin phrase *sola scriptura*, Scripture alone, and we Free Will Baptists thankfully have embraced this position. Our denominational Treatise begins its theological statements with a full-throated endorsement of Scripture, calling the Bible “a sufficient and infallible rule and guide to salvation and all Christian worship and service.” It names Scripture as “our absolute authority.”

With that said, we face the subtle and very real danger of placing our tradition above and beyond the reach of Scripture. Those who make this mistake do so through the two-step process of believing their theological tradition to be a correct interpretation of Scripture and therefore equating the two, putting their statements of faith or their denomination’s on par with “thus saith the Lord.” With such thinking, to preserve one’s tradition is to preserve God’s truth. However, we should be more humble, remembering that in our fallen world “we know in part” (1 Corinthians 13:12) and not fully. Augustine’s concept of “learned ignorance” comes to mind. Our aim, therefore, should be first and foremost to promote the Word of God, and out of loyalty to God and His Word, we should maintain openness to disagreeing with our stated confessions of faith. Luther both taught this and sometimes undermined it by overconfidence in his conclusions.

This openness may frighten some, but the alternative is to refuse God and Scripture the right to sit in judgment over what we think and do. To reject this openness also grants others the right to be closed to scriptural argument, so Presbyterians must always remain Presbyterians and Catholics always Catholics. Is it not a wonderful fact that in 1654 Henry Dunster, the first president of Harvard College, reconsidered his position regarding infant baptism and, knowing it would cost him his job and more, became a Baptist? Is it not a joy to read of missionary Adoniram Judson’s commitment to Scripture, which led him to question his Congregational roots and become a Baptist? We could point to a host of others, including our own Benjamin Randall, whose loyalty to God’s Word led him to challenge his church’s tradition and to preach Free Will Baptist theology.

James Arminius noted the danger of tradition in his day and suggested an interesting precaution: “Is it not useful, for the purpose of bearing testimony to the power and the liberty of the church, occasionally to make some change in the laws ecclesiastical, lest the observance of them becoming perpetual, and without any change, should produce an opinion of the (absolute) necessity of their being observed?”

Third, Luther instructs us that because of God’s greatness, Christians should conduct themselves courageously. Repeatedly, the Reformer faced circumstances where obedience to God, as he understood it, placed his life in jeopardy. His attacks on the church’s sale of indulgences, which tied forgiveness to financial contributions, riled the pope and prompted him to have Luther disciplined. The plan was to get the German to an open meet-

ing in Worms and force the label heretic on him. There was serious question, however, whether Luther would attend, for everyone knew what had happened in 1415: they promised the reform-minded John Huss safe conduct but then found a way to imprison him and later burn him at the stake.

Luther could have refused to meet, but instead he exposed himself to grave danger and went to debate the points he had raised against the church. On April 7, 1521, ten days before the meeting, he preached: "I will tell the truth, I must tell the truth, even though it cost me my neck 20 times over." So he preached to a friendly audience, but did he hold fast when his life hung in the balance? Indeed, he did!

When asked at the meeting whether he would recant his positions, he famously said: "Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason (for I do not trust either in the pope or in councils alone, since it is well known that they have often erred and contradicted themselves), I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted, and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not recant anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. May God help me. Amen."

Shortly after taking this stand, Luther left Worms and was taken by friends to a hideout, the Castle Wartburg, for fear he would be seized by the Catholics and meet the fate of Huss.

Six years later, the bubonic plague swept through Germany, and Luther was asked whether ministers should stay in infected cities or flee to safer locales. His answer was an open letter entitled *Whether One May Flee From a Deadly Plague*. He wrote: "Those who are engaged in a spiritual ministry such as preachers and pastors must likewise remain steadfast before the peril of death. We have a plain command from Christ, A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep but the hireling sees the wolf coming and flees (John 10:11). For when people are dying, they most need a spiritual ministry."

These were not empty words. On August 2, 1527, the plague struck Wittenberg, where Luther lived and ministered. With mortality rates ranging from 30 to 90%, sufferers experienced fever, delirium, huge boils, and loss of consciousness. Death often followed infection within three or four days. Elector John ordered Luther and his colleagues to leave for Jena. However, the Reformer stayed and ministered to the suffering. By August 19, 1,800 people had died. Luther's own house was turned into a hospital of sorts, while his wife Katie was pregnant. His son Hans refused to eat for three days. Luther wrote: "There are battles without and terrors within." Yet he stayed. In 1546, at age 62, Luther died in his bed, but he had lived a life full of courage and trust in God and had been willing to die for his Lord.

Finally, Luther teaches us that God can and does use deeply flawed instruments. For all his greatness, the man who almost

single-handedly turned the religious world on its head had serious shortcomings. Bombastic and intolerant, he sliced and diced about everyone who disagreed with him, often employing scatological terminology too crass to include here. Examples of his sharp words are not hard to find. He labeled his Roman Catholic adversaries "sophistic worms, grasshoppers, locusts, frogs, and lice." One opponent he called "a toad eater and a fawner." Even those who basically sided with him sometimes felt his verbal lashings. Though agreeing with Zurich's Huldrych Zwingli on so much, he allowed their disagreement regarding the Lord's Supper to poison their relationship. He later mocked the minister and exulted in his death, sardonically writing: "Blessed is the man who hath not walked in the counsel of the Sacramentarians; nor stood in the way of the Zwinglians; nor sat in the seat of the Zurichers."

French Reformer John Calvin never met Luther but recognized the debt he owed the German, referring to him as "endued with rare and excellent virtues," "a most distinguished servant of Christ, to whom we are all of us largely indebted," and "the very excellent pastor of the Christian Church." But Calvin also wrote of "Luther's unkindness," his "fierce invective...his restless, uneasy temperament which is so apt to boil over in every direction." The one letter Calvin penned to Luther was never delivered for fear of the German's negative reaction, though the letter was congenial, opening with the words "my much respected father."

It is sad to reflect on these harsh words of the Reformer, but there is more that must be said. His 1543 book *On the Jews and Their Lies* presents the darkest picture yet of the man. Earlier he had reached out to the Jews, but in this piece he vented his wrath without restraint, calling them "lazy rogues," a "devilish burden," and "our plague, our pestilence, and our misfortune." His recommendations for dealing with the Jews were even worse: "Set fire to their synagogues or schools," "their houses also [should] be razed and destroyed," "eject them forever from the country," and "they [should] be forbidden on pain of death to praise God, to give thanks, to pray, and to teach publicly among us and in our country."

Ah, Luther, how could you write such things?

But we might look in the mirror as we chide Luther for his lack of love. Confronted with the devil, the world, and our flesh, we sometimes turn on our own and act as though our brothers and sisters are the enemy. Surely, we must have our disagreements, but just as surely, we need not emulate Luther in how we handle them.

Five centuries ago the world desperately needed someone to call out the Church, and a young man, full of strength but also weakness, stepped forward. He still teaches us lessons and will perhaps inspire others to follow in his steps, for while the Church has thankfully been reformed, it must always be reforming. **ONE**

LEADERSHIP WHITEBOARD

BY RON HUNTER JR., Ph.D.

THE DARK SIDE OF LEADERSHIP PART 1

Controlling PERFECTIONISM

SENSE OF SUPERIORITY

Disempowerment

MANIPULATION INAUTHENTICITY

SELF-AGGRANDIZEMENT

LEADERSHIP QUOTE

GREAT MINDS TALK ABOUT IDEAS,
AVERAGE MINDS ABOUT EVENTS, AND
SMALL MINDS ABOUT OTHER PEOPLE.

—ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

Leaders, by their very nature, possess traits and attributes that reveal the ugly side of one's nature.

For example, to consider oneself a leader, he must possess a degree of narcissism because he believes he has the capability to lead peers. While a healthy ego is not negative, unchecked narcissism reveals the dark side of leadership. Other dark side tendencies could include self-aggrandizement, a sense of superiority, perfectionism, manipulation, and hypocrisy, among others.

What type of leader operates on the dark side? Leaders who possess a sense of superiority often have a high level of intelligence and believe their position precludes anyone from questioning their directives. Unless the situation demands a crisis level

leadership response, one should be slower to issue orders and spend time formulating a strategy that involves and improves the culture of the organization. Interaction precedes directives. After hearing from various perspectives, a leader is still responsible for the final call, but leaders should seek right outcomes over being right. Allowing people to point out weaknesses in an idea, direction, or initiative will only make it stronger. Sadly, many leaders do not possess the self-confidence to listen to the criticism of their followers. Take a page from thinkers like Socrates, Plato, and Aquinas who could argue and critically address problems without attacking the person holding this view. Even these greats knew they were not the smartest person in the room on every topic.

The dark side also appeals to “controlling leaders,” an oxymoron. Leaders do not control; they influence, inspire, and invest in the people

around them. Controlling leaders make everything about their own goals, position, and way of doing things. What do we call a controlling leader? A dictator. Because of purpose or mission, few would equate pastors, denominational leaders, or deacons to Noriega, Castro, Stalin, Mao, Bin Laden, Mussolini, or even Hitler, but their philosophy of leading may bear some striking resemblance. Controlling leaders of the 19th century used whips and weapons; those in the early to mid 20th century used titles and threats; but today, leaders intimidate with suggestive words that demean or bully to get their way. When one suggests you are not as wise, holy, prudent, smart, or any other comparative word, his behavior is verbal bullying. Controlling leaders are those who always want to be right, exhibit conscious or unconscious condescension, rely on verbal bullying, and using people as means to an end rather than the end itself.

AS YOU CONTINUE TO DEVELOP YOUR LEADERSHIP SKILLS, TRAIN YOURSELF TO AVOID THE DARK SIDE.

LEADERSHIP READING:

SERVANT LEADERSHIP: A JOURNEY INTO THE NATURE OF LEGITIMATE POWER AND GREATNESS

BY ROBERT GREENLEAF

Imagine your leadership growth if you tackled the six books recommended each year.



Who would you pick to coach you? If you are a golfer, you might select any of the top PGA tour players to help your swing. Who would you select for a tutor if you love church history? To become a better leader, you might select Maxwell, Bennis, Drucker, Burns, or another well-known leadership author. Who would help you connect better as a parent or grandparent?

Whatever your passion, what would it mean to spend 30 minutes each week with an expert in that field? Odd question: Is your profession your passion? If not, you might need to do some prayerful soul searching to recalibrate and rediscover that passion. If yes, then you owe it to yourself and the people you lead to fuel that passion regularly. Every solid leadership book suggests you must be growing and developing for those you lead to grow as well. The question is how are you stretching and learning?

The disciplines you adopt define you and your accomplishments. Whether you want to find insightful ways to parent, relate as a spouse, counsel as a grandparent, or develop as a leader, listening to leading experts can help you achieve those goals. Where can you find such a coach and what is the consulting fee?

There are three logical places to find this “deeper level” of coaching. The first is to attend a conference on the topic or topics in which you desire to become more proficient. The conference option requires the biggest investment, but you can hear from many leaders in one setting. Conferences allow you to interact with speakers and attendees, providing multiple learning experiences.

The second option for coaching gives you six to 12 hours with one coach depending on how long a book he or she wrote. Yes, this developmental opportunity requires reading. Pick from many great titles, but pick one where the author and publisher have credentials to truly help. Reading provides access to a coach and learning you might never have access to in person. Libraries have long been a bastion of learning, providing thousands of “coaches” you can take home with you.

A final and no-cost way to bring a coach into your world is through podcasts. Do you have time driving to and from work or while running errands? Turn off the music, as it is only bubblegum for your ears, and turn on substantive content. Podcasts deliver weekly content and coaching that speak into your selected area of ministry, family, and other significant relationships. Listening to podcasts forms a normal part of many people’s routines.

Such coaching could change your world and the lives of those around you. Look at it this way: spending time with one of these leaders is like having your own personal coach in all the areas that truly matter. While Randall House offers both a conference and reading opportunities (see sidebar), our newest coaching opportunity is the free D6 Podcast. This podcast, offered weekly, features experts in areas such as leadership, family, marriage, youth ministry, grandparenting, children’s ministry, pastoring, and many other family-ministry related topics.

Imagine what listening for 30 minutes each week could do for you and your church ministry. Invite your ministry leaders and parents to learn along with you.

The D6 Podcast is free and easy to subscribe to via your phone or computer. Check out www.d6family.com/podcast for instructions on subscribing and to listen.

Who will be your coach? You make the call. Attend a conference, grab a book, listen to a podcast, and keep developing as a leader. You cannot teach what you have not learned. Your church cannot grow beyond what you know. And you cannot expect healthy growth without practicing healthy habits. **ONE**

D6 conference
The **D6 Conference** each September is where church leadership teams gather to learn and strategize for healthy family ministry and church health. For info and a full list of speakers, visit www.d6conference.com.

V conference
Vertical Three Conference – every July with numerous workshops and featured speakers

Books for coaching by Randall House:

Relentless Parenting
by Brian and Angela Haynes

Teaching for Change
by Ken Coley

The DNA of D6 by Ron Hunter Jr.

Visionary Marriage by Rob Rienow

First Aid for Emotional Hurts
by Edward Moody

Pick Your COACH

Axis
Brian and Angela Haynes
Brian Housman
Bruce Wilkinson
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Dannah Gresh
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About the Writer: Ron Hunter Jr., Ph.D., is executive director/CEO of Randall House. Learn more at www.RandallHouse.com.



Curriculum Discipleship Plan 2017 Scope and Sequence

Nov 2017 - New Testament (1 Corinthians) *Effects of Being in Christ*

- Week 1 - Unity in Christ
- Week 2 - Purity in Christ
- Week 3 - Content in Christ
- Week 4 - Freedom in Christ

Dec 2017 - New Testament (1 Corinthians) *Benefits of Being a Believer*

- Week 1 - Body of Christ
- Week 2 - Spiritual Gifts
- Week 3 - The Excellence of Love
- Week 4 - The Greatest Gift
- Week 5 - The Promise of Resurrection



**PASTOR
WANTED**

Found

By
Brandon
Roysden

It's the conversation you're never really prepared for. After a Sunday morning worship service, our pastor called me and another deacon into his office. We knew he had been having some health complications, but we had no idea the disease had progressed so quickly. Then we heard the words that would change the direction of our church, "My doctor's have told me that I can't keep up the duties of the church, and I need to retire."

Less than a year before, I was honored to become a deacon at the church I have attended for 15 years. Little did I know we would soon be saying goodbye to a pastor of more than 20 years and entering into the search for the next man to lead our church.

Beyond the emotional impact of this revelation came the scary realization that we were now tasked with an incredible responsibility...one neither of us had experienced before. Thankfully, after eight months of prayer, scores of conversations, and more meetings than we care to remember, we recently welcomed a new pastor to the pulpit at Bethlehem Free Will Baptist Church. From this side of the process, I have a new appreciation for the effort, faith, and steps required to walk through such a pivotal time in the life of a church. For me, it was a lesson in faith and patience and one that taught me many valuable lessons, some of which hopefully can aid others who find themselves in a similar position.

When the leader of any church leaves or resigns, especially one who has enjoyed a long tenure, the steps to find the next leader can be precarious and unknown. It is with full understanding of this truth, that I humbly submit the following guide. We are definitely not experts, but we are thankful to God for His gracious guidance and mercy that led us through a difficult time in our church.

Prepare and communicate quickly. Because our pastor communicated in advance, we were able to announce the first church-wide meeting about next steps the morning our pastor resigned. We actually planned the meeting for that evening. Alleviating concerns and showing the congregation we had a plan was integral in earning trust with our people.

Honor your exiting pastor. Regardless of the situation, saying goodbye to a pastor is an emotional experience. Barring a change due to church disciplinary reasons, it is totally appropriate to honor your outgoing pastor, whether he is retiring or simply moving forward to his next calling. Depending on the situation, some church members may have hard feelings toward the departing pastor, but he was the man of God for your church for this time, and he should be treated as such. In our situation, the pastor was forced into early retirement by his health. We demonstrated our love and appreciation through a reception, gifts, help with moving, and more. Your approach may be different, but don't forget to thank God for the service of one man of God as you enter your search for another.

Know the rules. Every church is different, but it is important for the leadership to know and study church documents to understand the prescribed process for finding a pastor. The church may have certain guidelines no one remembers, especially if it has been a long time since anyone has reviewed this section of the church's constitution.

Lean on the experience of others. One of the first things we did was reach out to others who had been through this process (both churches and pastors) to ask what advice they might have. Some

suggested books, some warned of pitfalls, and others simply encouraged us throughout the process. It was comforting to know we were on the right track because we were hearing from others who had been through it before.

Use time wisely. The time your church is without a pastor should not be wasted. For us, it was important we communicate some specific messages to our church and to get feedback about the type of church we want to be. This is one area I wish we could've been even more intentional, but during this time, we conducted a church survey, completed book studies about church health, and repeatedly emphasized what the future of our church could look like. For us, Sunday nights gave us time for updates and interaction. The time between pastors may not look exactly like that for you, but I encourage you to take full advantage of the time to create clear direction and outline a hopeful future for your congregation.

Find an interim if possible. We found a former pastor in the area willing to fill the pulpit regularly during the transition. Finding an interim was one of the most frequent pieces of advice I heard in conversations with others who had been through pastoral transition. Having someone to shoulder the preaching ministry of the church allows leadership to focus on other important matters. Obviously, this is not always possible, but when it is, I highly recommend it.

Create a guiding coalition. In some churches, this may be a pastoral search committee; for some, it is the deacon board; for others, it is a diverse leadership team. Regardless, ensure you have an easy and effective way to communicate with this group.

If possible, appoint members from multiple demographics (middle-aged women, older men, newer members, church founders, etc.). If every member of the team can understand each step and feel like they have a voice, it can go a long way to having them advocate the process and decisions back to the congregation.

Keep everyone informed. As I mentioned above, we made it clear that Sunday nights were the place to get the latest information or ask questions. We announced updates regarding the search, shared items of prayer, and previewed what was coming up in the process. This may function differently in your context, but I cannot overemphasize the importance of keeping everyone informed. This doesn't mean you must share every candidate or detail, but it is crucial to make the members of your congregation part of the process and to let them know what they can expect from the church leadership throughout the search.

Accept/Evaluate Candidates. This may be one of the more difficult parts of transition. Depending on your network, it can be difficult to get the word out to qualified and interested candidates. For us, we tried to let everyone possible know we were looking for a pastor, and asked if they knew of anyone looking for a congregation to shepherd. Reach out to leaders in your denominational agencies. Simply informing these leaders that your church is seeking a pastor puts your church in their mind as they travel and speak to potential candidates throughout the year. In addition, the Executive Office offers a church and pastor postings page on its website to help with this process. Once you have received sufficient resumes, you'll need to decide how you will evaluate them. After providing resumes, sermon recordings, and answers to our questionnaire, we had everyone on the pastoral search team list the candidates in the order they felt would give us the best path forward. This allowed us to see if anyone rose to the top of the list. When they did, that's where we started.

Hosting the candidate. Once the search team and a candidate are open to exploring next steps, it's time to schedule a day for the candidate to visit your church. Before this happened, we communicated multiple times with the candidate, and, thanks to advances in technology, hosted a video call to allow the search team and the candidate to get to know one another. Once the date for a visit is set, advertise well in advance. In addition to having the candidate preach on Sunday morning, we also felt it important for the congregation to interact with him in a different environment, so we invited everyone back for a fellowship

meal on Sunday night and had a Q&A time hosted by the head of the search team and the candidate. We invited our members to submit questions as well. This gave everyone a chance to hear from the potential pastor in a conversational style, and to hear his vision and approach to ministry.

Be Patient. Multiple advisors warned against the danger of getting in a hurry, and we found this to be true. A common "rule of thumb" is to expect transition to take at least one month for every year of the previous pastor's tenure. (For our church, this would have been almost two years.) While no one wanted to wait that long, our resolve was tested after nearly eight months passed without a pastor. I firmly believe our patience was rewarded when God moved to bring us the pastor He had prepared for our church.

Pray, pray, and pray some more. This could be both the first piece of advice as well as the last and should be constant throughout. Without a move of God, everything else is simply man's attempt to obtain resumes and host a job interview. As a church, we wanted more than someone to fill a position. We wanted God to guide us to His choice for our church. Encourage prayer in your people. Plan fasts. Schedule dedicated times of prayer. Whatever you do, don't stop praying until God has answered with His man for His season, however long that may be.

As a former teacher and current event director at Randall House, lists like the one above are my friends. I love X's and O's and being able to follow a process. As a matter of fact, perhaps the most difficult part of the entire search came when the process ended, and we had to wait. I told some of my closest friends, "Following the process was the easy part. Waiting on and discerning God's will are the most difficult, by far."

And though our search was not without hurdles, we can now look back and see God's hand at work. We made mistakes along the way and had to course correct. We waded through numerous candidates before finding the one God had prepared for our church. We became discouraged and weren't sure what was going to happen. But now, a few months into the tenure of our new pastor, I cannot overstate how thankful I am to our people, the members of the search team, and ultimately to God for walking with us through this valley. Our source of sorrow has become our source of hope, and that sounds just about the way God does things to me (Psalm 30:11). **ONE**

About the Writer: Brandon Roysden is chairman of the deacon board at Bethlehem FWB Church in Ashland City, Tennessee. He also serves as director of events for Randall House and director of the Vertical Three Conference.



A
Wonderful Life...

as a
Chaplain's Wife

by Brenda Steedley

THE MILITARY: A calling to a soldier and his wife

As a teenager, I dreamed about marrying a preacher or a soldier. I never imagined marrying a man who would become both. I grew up in a Christian home, and my family was very patriotic. I had two older brothers who served in the military, one in the Army and one in the Air Force. Looking back, I believe the love of God and country and the value of Christian service influenced my early thoughts about marriage.

"I'm married to my hero." Those words on a patriotic plaque caught my eye as I browsed in a gift shop this past Memorial Day. The words rang true to my heart. What an incredible journey began June 7, 1970! That was the day Kerry Steedley and I married at my home church, Double Branch FWB Church in middle Georgia. This year, we celebrated 47 years of partnership in marriage and ministry. (Actually, our journey together began October 17, 1968, on our first date at Welch College.) For 34 of those 47 years, I lived the life of an Army wife. We are now blessed to continue in military ministry as volunteers in military chaplain support for FWB North American Ministries, under the leadership of Dr. David Crowe. I especially enjoy getting to know our FWB chaplain wives and trying to encourage them.

My life as an Army wife began in 1971, when Kerry enlisted as an active-duty soldier for three years. One of those years he was in Vietnam, while I took our infant son Kevin and lived with my parents. We then lived at Fort Stewart, Georgia, until Kerry completed his enlistment and was honorably discharged, one month after our daughter Tracy was born.

Then I became a Free Will Baptist pastor's wife. Kerry served in the National Guard for one year and in the U.S. Army Reserve for two years during those five years of pastoring. With only a brief break after his seminary graduation, my role as the wife of a FWB Army chaplain began and continued for 28 years, until Kerry retired in July 2006. It's a life I look back on with love and thankfulness.

MARRIAGE: A covenant and commitment

I am so grateful for God's all-sufficient grace during those years. The military is a mobile lifestyle, with frequent moves for the family, some stateside and others overseas. There are numerous deployments for the soldier when the spouse temporarily becomes a single parent. Whether the soldier is away in combat or simply training, the deployment adds stress on the family. These separations are challenges, but they are also opportunities for the chaplain's wife to provide a ministry of encouragement to those left behind. I am personally thankful that the military community has a sense of family with a strong commitment to family support. The stress of military service can contribute to either making or breaking a marriage. Thankfully, ours was made stronger, and we were able to minister to others.

MINISTRY: A calling, not just a career

I saw my primary role as a chaplain's wife in supporting my husband's ministry. However, I discovered ample opportunities for my own ministry. The chaplain's wife is a member of the command and staff wives organization. Daily, she can be light and salt as a Christian by attending social functions, change of command ceremonies, memorial services, and funerals. Weekly, she can serve as a Bible study leader and teacher for the women of the chapel and volunteer in Sunday School. She can sing in the chapel choir and work in Vacation Bible School. She is, after all, a pastor's wife. Her husband just happens to wear a uniform. They worship and serve in a place called a chapel, not a church.

For us, the military was more than a career; it was a calling. We were so blessed to serve our nation's soldiers and their families, to walk, live, and serve among these heroes. We were especially blessed to see lives changed by the power of the gospel. The military was our mission field. Serving God and country was our mission.

MEMORIES: A collection of people and places

I remember all our homes, some on post in government quarters and others off-post in the civilian community. Some proved especially challenging to turn into a home. I particularly remember one in Germany and one in Hawaii. To paraphrase a quote I saw on a Hallmark card, "Home is not a location; it's a person." I was often reminded in our moves that a house becomes a home when you live there with the people you love—in my case, my husband and our children.

I remember the sadness of leaving family and friends that soon turned into joy as God brought new friends into our lives. Some acquaintances have become life-long friends. I remember my concern as a mother, and as an elementary school teacher, for our two children and the potential impact all the moves and school changes might have on their lives. Today, they both tell us they are glad for all the places they got to live and for the friends they made. This joyful journey, at least from the perspective of looking back with rejoicing and not regret, included 20 moves for the family and 26 moves for Kerry.

If I could go back, I'd let go of the last assignment more quickly, enjoy the current place of duty even more, and think less about our future assignments, leaving that in God's providential care. I will always cherish the support of our beloved denomination, especially Home Missions. Pat Thomas was so encouraging and was especially helpful and caring to me as a young chaplain's wife beginning my journey as a missionary to the military. It is my special joy now to serve alongside Kathey Crowe in a ministry of encouragement to our chaplain wives as I continue this extended journey.

PRAYER REQUESTS:

Please join me in praying for our nation, our leaders, our military, and our FWB chaplains and their families. Please commit to pray for our currently serving military chaplain wives: Mona (Terry) Austin, Ginger (Tracy) Kerr, Blair (Lee) Frye, Darla (Kevin) Trimble, Danielle (Mark) McCraney, Emmy (Hal) Jones, Sherri (Brad) Hanna, Jan (Roy) Swisher, and Cathy (Amir) Ashoori.

In addition, please lift up the widows of former FWB chaplains: Bertie (Gerald) Mangham, Betty (James) Bishop, Wanda (David) Spears, and Brenda (Ernest) Harrison. Thank God for our retired chaplains and their wives and children: the family of Nedo Eady, medically retired and deceased; the Walt Golding family; the Tim Sturgill family; the David Burgess family; the Larry Langford family; the Steve Simpson family; the Robert Cooper family; the David Trogdon family; and the John Carey family.

PRAISE & REFLECTION:

Kerry has often told churches that I had the toughest job in the Army as an Army wife. He would add that he had the very best position, serving as a FWB Army chaplain. He felt doubly blessed to serve as both a soldier of the cross and a soldier of our country. He really did enjoy the military and the life of a soldier, but there were some hard, challenging times for him. I didn't just like our life in the military. I absolutely loved it! I have no regrets. Rather, I have wonderful memories of all the places we lived and the people we met. I would gladly do it all over again. Thanks to God and our fellow Free Will Baptists, for endorsing us for military chaplain ministry and allowing and enabling us to represent you while serving God and Country. 

About the Writer: Brenda Steedley faithfully served beside her husband as an Army wife for 34 years. Her current assignment/primary duty involves loving and caring for five grandchildren.

About the Denomination >>

Tom McCullough Called Home

Antioch, Tennessee—Thomas Ross McCullough, former missionary to France, entered his heavenly home around 7:00 a.m., August 11, 2017. After a long, hard-fought battle with pancreatic cancer, the 66-year-old achieved victory Friday morning.

Appointed as missionaries in May 1979, Tom and his wife Patty departed for France in August 1980. After language school, they began work in Rennes, France, with Joe and Barbara Haas. When the Haas family returned to the States for stateside assignment, the McCulloughs continued in Rennes. While there, the McCulloughs began a student ministry at the University of Rennes.

Later they moved to St. Nazaire to sustain that work while Jerry and Barbara Gibbs were on stateside assignment. The couple continued in St. Nazaire, working with Jerry and Barbara Gibbs and Patsy Vanhook.

The McCulloughs returned to the States in 1991, when Patty was diagnosed with cancer. Patty's battle with cancer led the couple to resign in 1995. Though embattled with recurring cancer and MS, Tom and Patty yearned to be involved in missions. Tom taught missions at Welch College, impacting the lives of hundreds of students.

Tom returned to his home church, Central Free Will Baptist (now Central Oaks Community Church), in Royal Oak, Michigan, to pastor. In 2004, the National Association of Free Will Baptists elected Tom to the Board of Free Will Baptist International Missions. Tom served faithfully until 2016, the maximum number of years allowed.

At age 51, Patty's physical battles ended when she met her Savior in December 2004. Tom continued to pastor, mentoring young men to take the reins of both Central Oaks and Riverside Fellowship in Clinton Township.

A celebration of Tom's life and ministry was held at Central Oaks Community Church on Wednesday, August 16. Tom leaves behind his son Ian, mother Grace, and sisters Peggy, Beth, and Debbie.

Memorial tributes may be made to the Tom and Patty McCullough Scholarship Fund for Mission Students at Welch College, c/o Freewill Baptist Foundation P.O. Box 5002 Antioch, TN 37013. ■



2018 Nominees Requested

Antioch, Tennessee—The 2018 Nominating Committee, which will serve through the national convention in Little Rock, Arkansas, is prepared to receive nominees for the 2018 Convention election, according to Cory Thompson (OK), committee chairman.

The committee will meet December 5, 2017, at the annual Leadership Conference in Nashville, Tennessee, to consider nominations and to compile a report with a single nomination for each position to be filled. The report will be presented to delegates at the 2018 convention.

The following board and commission positions will be filled in 2018: Welch College (3), International Missions (3), Randall House Publications (3), Women Nationally Active for Christ (3), Commission for Theological Integrity (1), Historical Commission (1), Music Commission (1), Media Commission (1), General Board (12), Executive Committee (3), and General Officers (4).

The following boards do not elect members in 2018: Home Missions (North American Ministries), Board of Retirement, and Free Will Baptist Foundation. Nominations, accompanied by a brief resume, must be submitted in writing exclusively to the chairman on or before December 1.

Contact Chairman Cory Thompson: Nominating Committee, 601 West Blvd, Poteau, OK 74953.

Photo: Mark Cowart



KEITH BURDEN, CMP
Executive Secretary
National Association
of Free Will Baptists

ONE to ONE >> DIVINE PROTECTION

I will forever be grateful for the strong work ethic my father handed down to me. During the school year while many of my friends were “sleeping in” on Saturdays, I was usually on the jobsite helping my dad with his carpentry work. The sense of responsibility and self-discipline I learned has served me well through the years.

On one particular occasion, my younger brother and I accompanied my dad to work on a remodeling project located about 35 miles from our home. We did some painting and spent the rest of the time cleaning up debris from around the job site. We finished mid-afternoon and started the 45-minute trip back home.

Our route led us over a two-lane bridge spanning a section of the Arkansas River Kerr Navigational System. Upstream, the Army Corp of Engineers had built a lock and dam system for barges that navigated that canal with their cargo. The bridge was constructed with an arch configuration so oncoming traffic was not visible until you reached the pinnacle of the structure.

As we cruised over the bridge in my dad’s pickup truck that afternoon, he glanced to his left, watching barges floating downstream. I was looking to the right at the lock and dam. My brother was asleep in the seat between us. For some unknown reason, I happened to look up and see we were rapidly approaching another pickup directly in front of us. It was moving very slowly. We were traveling at a rate of 65 miles per hour. I yelled, “Dad, look out!”

What happened in the next few seconds seemed to transpire in slow motion. My father slammed on the brakes and instinctively swerved to the left to avoid a direct hit with the other vehicle. The right-front section of our pickup hit the left-rear section of the other pickup. The bone-jarring impact reduced our speed significantly; yet, the glancing blow propelled us against the curb on the opposite side of the bridge.

Somehow, my father was able to steer the pickup back into the appropriate lane of traffic and eventually bring it to a stop. As we sat there in stunned silence, I remember the distinct smell of burned rubber and radiator fluid. Momentarily, we exited the vehicle and checked on the other driver. Amazingly, he was not injured—only shaken up!

Several minutes later, a highway patrol officer arrived on the scene. Both disabled vehicles were towed away. I remember the patrolman saying, “You sure were lucky today.” We were not wearing seatbelts, and the collision could easily have ejected us through the windshield. The pickup didn’t flip over the bridge guardrail. We narrowly missed an oncoming tractor-trailer approaching in the other lane. The fact that we walked away from the accident unscathed was nothing short of a miracle.

From my point of view, luck had nothing to do with it. Everyone has an occasional brush with danger. Often, we aren’t aware we are in harm’s way. We take God’s protection for granted. We shouldn’t. I’m not suggesting we should be paranoid and live in fear. After all, He has promised to watch over our comings and goings (Psalm 121:8). Neither should we be presumptuous or oblivious to the perils around us.

We would do well to adopt the prophet’s perspective on this matter: “It is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is Thy faithfulness” (Lamentations 3:22-23).

Thank God for His divine protection. **ONE**



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